

MISJONSHØGSKOLEN

MIGRATION FOR WEALTH?  
CASE STUDIES OF STAVANGER IMMIGRANTS

MASTER THESIS – 30-MATH  
MASTER IN GLOBAL STUDIES

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## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Previous Research .....	4
2.1	My Focus .....	6
3	Methodology .....	7
3.1	Ethical Reflection .....	12
4	Theoretical Framework .....	13
4.1	Migration .....	16
4.1.1	Reasons for Migration .....	18
4.1.2	Return Migration .....	21
4.1.3	Immigration to Stavanger .....	23
4.2	Culture .....	25
4.3	Identity .....	27
4.4	Home .....	29
5	Empirical Findings .....	32
5.1	Case study 1 (Belgium) .....	32
5.2	Case study 2 (Czech Republic) .....	35
5.3	Case study 3 (France) .....	38
5.4	Case study 4 (Japan) .....	40
5.5	Case study 5 (Lithuania) .....	43
5.6	Case study 6 (Malaysia) .....	45
5.7	Case study 7 (New Zealand) .....	48
5.8	Case study 8 (Nicaragua) .....	50
5.9	Case study 9 (Portugal) .....	52
5.10	Case study 10 (Vietnam) .....	55
6	Comparative Analysis .....	58
6.1	Discussion .....	61
	List of References .....	64
	Appendices .....	69

# 1 Introduction

Migration is a phenomenon which is far from being new; however its meaning how we understand it now days has been developing and changing especially within the context of globalization. Simply said, migration is:

A process of moving, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people, and economic migrants.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, immigration can be defined as a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the aim to settle there.

Increasing numbers of people who decide to migrate also mean that more people are introduced to different cultures. They experience living in a different settings. Some of them can take the advantage of interesting job offers occurring in a global work markets but they all have to accept challenges that come with migration. They are migrants. Although there is no universally used definition, International Organization for Migration developed a glossary where the term migrant is explained simply and all-embracing:

The term migrant is usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor. This term therefore applies to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family.<sup>2</sup>

Status which migrants are accorded under the immigration law of the destination country is then immigrant.

Norway is generally understood as a rich country where migrants are welcomed, welfare system functions well, people have high salaries and live happily.<sup>3</sup> Who would not love to be there? Many people might think about it in a same way as numbers of immigrants are rising. The Norwegian professor of social anthropology Thomas Hylland Eriksen writes:

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<sup>1</sup> IOM (2004). Glossary on Migration. p. 41

<sup>2</sup> IOM (2004). Glossary on Migration. p. 40

<sup>3</sup> Březinová, M. (2013). Nejšťastnější na světě jsou Dánové. Češi klesli na devětatřicáté místo.

Between 1995 and 2011, the number of immigrants and their descendants in Norway almost tripled – reaching 600 000 out of a total population of 5 million. Alongside a rapid growth of the nation's ethnic minority population, debates about integration, immigration policy, multiculturalism, and national identity have flourished in Norway in recent years.<sup>4</sup>

These data are supplemented by a prognosis and estimates of Statistics Norway which presents that:

The number of immigrants in Norway is expected to rise considerably in the period 2010 to 2060, from 460 000 today to between 1 and 1.8 million in 2060. The number of Norwegian-born to immigrant parents will increase from 93 000 to between 300 000 and 500 000. The sum of these two groups is estimated to be between 1.3 and 2.3 million in 2060, or between 22 and 28 per cent of the total population.<sup>5</sup>

From these high numbers one can notice that migration is a really important and naturally highly discussed topic within Norwegian state and society. Lately, there have been new policies (some of them related right to immigration) developed as a response to changes in migration flows, enlargements of the EU, current requirements of the Norwegian labour market, a political situation worldwide...Is the situation really so “perfect” for people who decide to move to Norway? One can only guess. It definitely depends on who migrates and what he/she can offer to Norway back or where exactly he/she goes. The life stories vary. In my Thesis I present 10 case studies of people who decided to move to Stavanger. How do they experience their life there? Did they move in order to obtain higher salaries or career advancement which this city might offer? Or are there some other motives more important for them like, for instance, interesting work challenges or cultural reasons? Could Stavanger be just a ‘random choice’? Does the previous experience with migration affect somehow the decision to migrate again? Is it let us say easier or right more difficult after living abroad for some time? Or is this experience relevant at all? What were the biggest challenges when ‘my immigrants’ came to Stavanger? There are many questions which can be asked. I asked some and the results are presented at the end of my paper.

From a brief introduction above, one can see that as a topic for my Master Thesis I have chosen ‘migration’. I would like to put a special emphasis on immigrants in Stavanger and their perception of the migration experience. I am focused on labour market as well

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<sup>4</sup> Eriksen, T. H. (2013). *Immigration and National Identity in Norway*. p. 1

<sup>5</sup> SSB (2013). *Population projections, immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents, 2010-2060*

because I assumed that at least some of the respondents came to Stavanger right because of lucrative job opportunities or are/are planning to be active in the Stavanger labour market.

First reason for my choice is that I also moved to Stavanger and currently searching for a job. It will be interesting for me to find out more about the experience of my respondents who are more or less in the similar situation. I would like to detect if there are some common problems we have to face to, suchlike surprises, cultural shocks or other issues which are analogous.

Another reason for my choice is related to my previous studies (Joint Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations). I have already learned a lot about migration and this Master Thesis could provide me a space to extend my knowledge and to be focused on my interests and concerns.

My aims in this paper are, firstly to introduce concepts which provide a reader with a necessary theoretical framework and describe the situation in Stavanger. Secondly, to present personal experience of a group of immigrants in Stavanger from different angles (for example with regard to reasons of their migration, a construction of their identity with a migration experience, a perception of home etc.). Thirdly, I would like to point out similarities/differences in a perception of life as an immigrant in Stavanger. Last but not least, I will try to prove/disprove how migration theories correspond to personal experiences of my interviewees.

Migration helps to reconsider traditional boundaries between languages, cultures, ethnic groups and nation-states. It challenges cultural traditions or national identities. Let us have a closer look at some of the people who is migration about, present their experience...

## 2 Previous Research

Since the beginning of the age of mass migration – over a century ago – scholars have tended to develop general and universal explanations for the phenomenon of human migration. The final results of these attempts have been models, theoretical frameworks, conceptual approaches, and generalizations of empirical findings, simple and clear notions...

Today, there are many perspectives one can consider while writing and thinking about migration. I have done an extensive research of literature dealing with immigration, Norway and case studies at the same time. I have not found any such like studies or Theses with same focus which I would like to have but there are available similar books and articles approaching my topic. Some of them I used as an inspiration or guidelines for developing my own paper. They also provided me with an essential knowledge of certain terms, contexts and perspectives.

As the main theory for my paper which is related especially to labour migration I have chosen ‘*the new economics of labour migration*’ which is well described by Joaquín Arango in *Explanation migration: a critical view*.<sup>6</sup> Simply said, this theory points out the significant role of families and households, underlines the importance of remittances and pays more attention to information and to the complex interdependence between migrants and the context in which they operate. Another article which supports the theory about the importance of family relationships when talks about migration patterns is called *Connecting Family and Migration*<sup>7</sup> written by Linda Gjokaj, Maxine B. Zinn and Stephanie J. Nawyn. In my case studies I am focused on family issues a lot as the opinions and feelings of family members play a significant role at decisions making influence the actual perception of migration for individuals from my research.

Today when the cultures are not synonymous with countries any more it is important to know the background of migrants in order to get competence to communicate, understand and not fall for stereotypes, thus culture identity is one of the key points of my Thesis. Fred E. Jandt in his book *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication*:

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<sup>6</sup> Arango, J. (2000). Global Trends and Issues. *Explanation migration: a critical view*. pp. 283-296

<sup>7</sup> Gjokaj, L., Zinn M. B., Nawyn, S. (2012). *Connecting family and migration*. pp. 283-294

*Identities in a Global Community*<sup>8</sup> as well as Adrian Holliday, Martin Hyde and John Kullman in their work which is called *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*<sup>9</sup> discuss cultural issues from different perspectives. It was inspiring for my research and it provided me with a necessary theoretical framework.

The article *Return Migration*<sup>10</sup> by Janet W. Salaff deals with return migration which is closely related to my research question. It gave me an overview of the possible reasons and influencing of live of immigrants in host society such as level of their integration, willingness to learn and adapt etc.

When I was thinking about the right way how to describe Stavanger in my paper, I found many important terms which are well fitting. Some of the related topics can be cosmopolitanism and global cities in general. Allan M. Williams and Vladimír Baláž explain more in their book *International Migration and Knowledge*. To outline their thoughts I am presenting here a few words - global cities are “open systems” that attract internal and international migrants from diverse backgrounds. They further mention transnationalism and cosmopolitanism and write that “the transnational relationships play major parts in the making of contemporary world cities. Individuals with transnational lives can move relatively easily between global cities, with only limited personal dislocation costs.”<sup>11</sup>

The article *Twenty-first-century trends in highly skilled migration*<sup>12</sup> by Astrid Eich-Krohm which is particularly aimed at migration of high skilled workers gave me an essential background. This type of migration is one of the most significant due oil and gas business environment when Stavanger immigration is discussed.

Last but not least, for developing of my case studies I can take as an example the book *Lifestyle Migration: Expectations, Aspirations and Experiences*<sup>13</sup> by Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly. Especially, the chapter one *Escaping to the Good Life?* was inspiring for me with regard to the structure of such case studies.

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<sup>8</sup> Jandt, F. E. (2007). *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*. pp. 1-25, 289-315

<sup>9</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M., Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. pp. 54-81, 152-172

<sup>10</sup> Salaff, J. W. (2012). *Return Migration*. pp.460-468

<sup>11</sup> Williams, A. M., Baláž V. (2008). *International Migration and Knowledge*. p. 146

<sup>12</sup> Eich-Krohm, A. (2012). *Twenty-first-century in highly skilled migration*. pp. 153-165

<sup>13</sup> Benson, M., O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Lifestyle Migration: Expectations, Aspirations and Experiences*.

However, none of the mentioned sources deals with the same research questions, location and timing which I have chosen.

## **2.1 My Focus**

Migration has been a highly discussed topic for decades, it has positive as well as negative sides which affect lives of immigrants, and thus there are many people all around the world facing the same problems, having similar feelings or sharing common worries, which come along with this phenomenon. In my paper I will try to pinpoint at least some of them which I consider interesting. Generally speaking, themes of my thesis are: immigrants in Stavanger, emotional impacts of migration and factors influencing the decision to leave, stay or go back.

My main research questions are: What are the reasons for migration to Stavanger? What does it mean to be 'home' for immigrants? What is this feeling of belonging influenced by? What are the key factors for decision to stay in a new destination? What makes immigrants to move back to their country of origin? I do not intend to generalize my findings. All research questions are related only to a certain group of people I have chosen however the topics – feeling of belonging, reasons for migration and returning back/staying for good are common for all migrants and their life stories.

The principle objectives of my master thesis are, as I outlined already above, to look at the phenomenon of migration from different angles with a special emphasis on its emotional impacts. My purpose is to show on a small sample what immigrants face to, which problems and feelings they deal, what their decisions are effected by and what are the main challenges/joys, particularly a group of young immigrants in Stavanger.



### 3 Methodology

This chapter is introduced by three important books because they are a key source for a methodologically correct procedure for my Thesis. Namely, I have been using guidelines from books *Social Research Methods* by Alan Bryman, *Doing Qualitative Research* by David Silverman and *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research* by Adrian Holliday.

As a research strategy for my master thesis I have chosen qualitative research. Alan Bryman suggests:

It is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantifications in the collection and analysis of data. As a research strategy it can be inductivist, constructivist, and interpretivist, but qualitative researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these features.<sup>14</sup>

He also points out the importance of position of qualitative researchers.

Many qualitative researchers express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of people that they study. The social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied, rather than as though those subjects were incapable of their own reflections on the social world.<sup>15</sup>

Emphasis on context and description of facts plays an important role in the decision of choice of qualitative strategy. Bryman writes:

Qualitative researchers are much more inclined than quantitative researchers to provide a great deal of descriptive details when reporting the fruits of their research. This is not to say that they are exclusively concerned with description. They are concerned with explanation, and indeed the extent to which qualitative researchers ask ‘why?’ questions is frequently understated.<sup>16</sup>

I am focused on emotional impacts of migration which require, in my opinion, a face to face conversation with a small sample, preferably interviewees I know from before and there is some kind of a relationship and trust already built up. However, Alan Bryman argues that

it is often suggested that the scope of the findings of qualitative investigations is restricted. When participant observation is used or when

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<sup>14</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 266

<sup>15</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 279

<sup>16</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 280

interviews are conducted with a small number of individuals in a certain organization or locality, they argue that it is impossible to know how findings can be generalized to other settings.<sup>17</sup>

Having these words in my mind, I would like to underline that I do not intend to search for any general truths or rules, rather presenting certain individual cases, life stories and trying to find links to concepts and theories within.

Details are highly important for my research in order to provide a complex depiction. Following quotation supports my opinion:

Many qualitative studies provide a detailed account of what goes on in the setting being investigated. Very often qualitative studies seem to be full of apparently trivial details. However, these details are frequently important for the qualitative researcher, because of their significance for their subjects and also because the details provide an account of the context within which people's behaviour takes place.<sup>18</sup>

Another key argument for choosing qualitative research could be through comparison with quantitative one. There are some significant contrasts which led me to go for a qualitative research, namely qualitative focus on words, contextual understanding, deep data, meaning, natural setting or points of view of participants, while quantitative research prefers numbers, generalization, reliable data, behaviour, artificial setting and point of view of researcher.<sup>19</sup>

For developing my paper I have been using various research methods such as semi structured interviews, case studies and content and comparative analysis.

I will start (in chapter 2) with presenting previous research related to my topic. In this part I will highlight my objectives, aims and research questions. Methodology with a special emphasis on ethical reflection will follow (chapter 3).

In chapter 4 one can see primary as well as secondary sources which have helped me to develop a clear overview and conceptualize the phenomena of migration, culture, identity and home. These definitions are essential for solving my research questions, thus for the purpose of my whole Thesis. I will also explain what the system migration approach means because I have decided to use this perspective as the starting point according to which I will deal migration issues. As the main theory for my paper which

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<sup>17</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 284

<sup>18</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 280

<sup>19</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 287

is also closely related to labour migration I have chosen the new economics of labour migration which is well described by Joaquín Arango in *Explanation migration: a critical view*. Simply said, this theory points out the significant role of families and households, underlines the importance of remittances and pays more attention to information and to the complex interdependence between migrants and the context in which they operate. It is, let us say, an improved neo-classical theory.

In the same chapter I will also have a closer look at the current situation in Stavanger with regard to immigration; I will present some numbers, attitude, changes in a time manner as well as a working environment which some migrant groups can perceive as attractive. I will be using statistics, newspaper articles and some other primary sources. It is important to include this chapter because migration to Norway in general differs from migration to Stavanger. The main reason is that Stavanger is considered an oil capital of Norway, thus there are based many oil and gas companies which provide many job opportunities. At the same time they make the city more international as they demand special skills and people with specific education.

Then (in chapter 5 – Empirical Findings) I will be presenting 10 case studies which are based on the semi-structured interviews that have been conducted during my field work. According Allan Bryman semi-structured interview is:

The term that covers a wide range of instances. It typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series to questions that are in the general form of an interview schedule but is able to vary a sequence of questions. The questions are frequently somewhat more general in their frame of reference from that typically found in a structured interview schedule. Also, the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies.<sup>20</sup>

I have decided for semi-structured interviews because, from my point of view, this method provided my interviewees enough space to talk freely but at the same time I could follow the points which are essential for my paper and which helped me to answer my research questions at the end. The questions I had ready for interviews were a combination of open and closed ones. This way also gave latitude to my interviewees to tell more if they wanted while I could be sure that my question will be answered at least briefly. In other words, this method gives flexibility to both sides.

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<sup>20</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 196

To be clear about description of semi-structured interview, here is a quotation by Alan Bryman:

The researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an *interview guide*, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees. But, by and large, all of the questions will be asked and a similar wording will be used from interviewee to interviewee.<sup>21</sup>

In appendix 1 one can see what my interview guide looks like, which information my interviews had been given before our conversation and which topics and questions I have been interested in.

While developing my case studies I used as an example the book *Lifestyle Migration: Expectations, Aspirations and Experiences* by Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly. This book provided me guidelines what the good case study should consist of, how to make it interesting and how to include all important information and facts gained in interviews. Case studies in general can be described as "a research design that entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case. The term is sometimes extended to include the study of just two or three cases for comparative purposes."<sup>22</sup>

Regarding to a choice of my interviewees I would like to bring a detailed description of 'my immigrants'. I have been approaching every person as an individual but for now I will present facts which are common or vary for whole group. All people are the first-generation-immigrants in Stavanger coming from different countries of origin. My aim was to cover a wide spectrum of countries so there is always only one representative from one country, namely Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Portugal and Vietnam. I have tried to include as many continents as possible; hence I have people from Asia, Europe, Australia and America. It was essential for me because I believe that a cultural background can play an important role in the process of integration and decisions making. To be more specific about my interviewees, the age group is 25-37 and it is because of personal reasons. I belong myself into this age group, thus my networks in Stavanger are among people of this age group mostly. Another reason is that I have been interested in

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<sup>21</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 321

<sup>22</sup> Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. p. 691

experience, opinions and challenges of people which are in a similar stage of life as I am. I personally know all interviewees so I contacted them and conducted all interviews. I met them either face to face or used Skype. People I asked have different levels of education as well as current jobs. Their experience with previous migration varies, too. I examined men as well as women.

As a research language I was using mostly English except one interview which I conducted in Czech. The English-language competence of all my interviewees is good so I believe there were no misunderstandings or misinterpretations. There will not be any directly identifying data in my Thesis but the country of origin will be mentioned as I already wrote above, I perceive cultural background as one of the key factors while dealing with migration experience. I am using fake names and only general specification of a field of work, no gender information either.

While interviewing my sample I got many times a positive feedback. Some people told me that they actually finally got the chance to sum up their thoughts and ideas clearly. Some of them never spoke loudly or thought deeply about their emotions, challenges and joys related to migration. I have been praised for a good choice of questions which made me interviewees to become engrossed in the real feelings and fears. For me whole field work was a nicely spent time, I got to know my interviewees better and also got an opportunity to discuss things which we usually do not talk about in everyday conversations.

At the end (chapter 6) I will subsume a qualitative comparative analysis in which I will be comparing data gained during my field work, pointing out similarities and differences and outlining possible explanations. This analysis can be understood, according to Gordon Marshall, as a method based on binary logic and which attempts to maximize the number of comparisons that can be made across the cases while doing a research.<sup>23</sup>

After that, a discussion will follow. It will be a presentation of the answers for questions asked at the beginning of my Thesis, evaluation of my hypotheses, linking to concepts and a brief summary of facts which are related to my topic.

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<sup>23</sup> Marshall G. (1998). Qualitative comparative analysis In Dictionary of Sociology.

### 3.1 Ethical Reflection

Ethical reflection is an important perspective which has to be included in my methodology because one can object, let us say, conflict of interests, misrepresented or biased results of my interviews. There is a useful chapter in the book *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research* by Adrian Holliday, which is called *Writing about Relations*. Holliday pursues the theme of a personal position of the researcher and the way how he/she writes about other people in research setting. As I personally know all my interviewees I had to make sure that my research strategy, interpretation of the gained data and ethical reflections were adequate. Briefly, Adrian Holliday mentions that

The researcher must to see through and liberate herself from the professional discourse she brings with her in order to establish relations with the people in the research setting on their own terms. They are there as people in their own right, not simply to participate in her research. Researches must be prepared to take on roles that are meaningful to culture, which may be alien to the professional research discourse.<sup>24</sup>

There could be also a pitfall. Holliday explains

When entering the setting, the researcher is also bringing her own cultural baggage and discourse. The setting thus becomes a culture of dealing between this and the culture of the people there. It is a dangerous place where misconceptions of the foreign other can easily arise.<sup>25</sup>

Following all recommendations I do believe I developed a good paper and the fact I know all my interviewees will be only useful after all. Moreover, it has been easier to get in touch with my sample; I had a chance to contact them again if needed. However, I am aware of pitfalls which such a close relation might bring. That is also why I started every interview with an explanation of my aims and interests again and said that there could be some questions we had discussed before. I pointed out that my position was ‘the researcher’ at the time of interviewing and interpreting data later. These measures helped me to keep important distance. Another thing which might be challenging comes while analysing data. These possible rigours of not objective interpretation I tried to overcome through following recommended research guidelines and also keeping focused on what was directly said.

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<sup>24</sup> Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. p. 163

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## 4 Theoretical Framework

There are various theories and perspectives applicable to my Thesis with regard to my research questions and particular interests but I have decided to be focused especially on two. I believe that they provide me with a clear overview, and thus help me to connect my results with lucidly defined concepts and sum up my conclusions at the end. To be more specific, as the main strategy I have chosen to follow the system migration approach and I am trying to explain terms mostly within the context of New Economic of Migration theory.

The system migration approach fits to the aims of my paper because there is an emphasis on society of country of origin of the migrant. It also deals with global structures and systems and at the same time considers certain specifics of destination countries and its society. I perceive it as the most complex and suitable for solving my research questions.

Dirk Hoerder in his book *Cultures in Contact* explains

The system approach to migration...combines analysis of the position of a society of origin in the global order, its structures, the regional specifics,...the process of migration itself, and – within the receiving society's structures – the insertion into partly internationalized labor market, the formation of ethnic enclaves or of transcultural networks, and the interaction with new social values and norms.<sup>26</sup>

There are various descriptions of the whole system-migration perspective. I am suggesting one draft here. Simply said, migration-system approaches have four main characteristics. First one is that

Migration-system theories assume that migration systems pose the context in which movement occurs and that it influences actions on whether to stay or to move... Basically, a migration system is here defined as two or more places (most often nation-states) connected to each other by flows and counter flows of people.<sup>27</sup>

Second one can put an emphasis on the existence of: “linkages between countries other than people, such as trade and security alliances, colonial ties and flows of goods, services, information and ideas. These linkages often have existed before migration

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<sup>26</sup> Hoerder, D. (2002). *Cultures in Contact: World Migration in the Second Millennium*. p. 19

<sup>27</sup> Faist, T. (1997). The Crucial Meso-level. In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, & T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. p. 192

flows occurred.”<sup>28</sup> Here one can see as an example some European countries which used to have colonies in the past, receive migrants from these former colonies often.

Next one emphasizes the aim. To be more specific, migration systems theory focuses on processes within migration systems. Movement is not regarded a one-time event but rather as a dynamic process consisting of a sequence of events across time.<sup>29</sup>

Last but not least,

Within the context of important factors such as economic inequalities within and between national-states and the admission policies of the receiving states, individuals, households and families develop strategies to cope with stay-or-go alternatives. Lately, systems theorists have started to apply social network theory vigorously...Social networks consist of more or less homogeneous sets of ties between three or more actors. Network patterns of social ties comprise economic, political networks of interaction, as well as collectives such as groups and associations.<sup>30</sup>

As the main theory for my paper I have chosen The New Economics of Migration. It is a relatively new theory and commonly considered as one of the most migration-specific.<sup>31</sup> It has developed out of the Neo-classical Economics theory and one can see many similar thoughts in both but at the same time there are differences which are especially important with regard to return migration and its approach. Simply said, this theory points out the significant role of families and households, underlines the importance of remittances and pays more attention to information and to the complex interdependence between migrants and the context in which they operate. It is, let us say, an improved neo-classical theory. The core is, as Douglas Massey writes:

Migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors, but by larger units of related people – typically families or households – in which people act collectively not only to maximize expected income, but also to minimize risks and loosen constraints associated with a variety of market failures, apart from those in the labor market.<sup>32</sup>

There is obviously a difference in destination which migrants choose with regard to the level of probability of succeeding. For instance, the situation can be determined as ‘low-

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<sup>28</sup> Faist, T. (1997). The Crucial Meso-level. In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, & T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. pp. 192-193

<sup>29</sup> Faist, T. (1997). The Crucial Meso-level. In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, & T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. p. 193

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Arango, J. (2000). Global Trends and Issues. Explanation migration: a critical view. p. 287

<sup>32</sup> Massey, D., et al. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal, *Population and Development Review*. p. 436



risk' in a well-developed country with a stable labour market. Norway can be understood as one meeting these criteria...There exist also formal insurance arrangements which protect certain businesses and workers (e. g. farming and subsequently farmers and their families – crop insurance, unemployment insurance etc.).

New Economics of Migration suggests a set of policies which can be applied. I am presenting here a couple of them which Douglas Massey sums up as follows:

- 1) A wage differential is not a necessary condition for international migration to occur; households may have stronger incentives to diversify risks through transnational movement even in the absence of wage differentials.
- 2) The same expected gain in income will not have the same effect on the probability of migration for households located at different points in the income distribution, or among those located in communities with different income distributions.
- 3) Government policies and economic changes that shape income distributions will change the relative deprivation of some households and thus alter their incentives to migrate.
- 4) Government policies and economic changes that affect the distribution of income will influence international migration independent of their effects on mean income. In fact, government policies that produce a higher mean income in migrant-sending areas may increase migration if relatively poor households do not share in the income gain. Conversely, policies may reduce migration if relatively rich households do not share in the income gain.<sup>33</sup>

But is it always so simple? Did my interviewees go for the “safest option”? Did they consider all risks when they decided to leave? Migration often brings along much more than the individual can imagine before he/she/family decides to go...

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<sup>33</sup> Massey, D., et al. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal, *Population and Development Review*. pp. 439-440

## 4.1 Migration

No doubt that migration is both a result and a cause of development. It is also a spatial phenomenon that has been studied within most social science disciplines. Especially, international migration raises questions related to many fields like anthropology, law, economy, social medicine, sociology, psychology, geography, history, political science etc. Therefore, the multidisciplinary approach is highly needed. Caroline Brettel points out:

Although migrants around the globe have common experiences, migration itself is a complex and diverse phenomenon. Migrants can be differentiated by sex, class, ethnicity, the nature of their labor force participation, their reasons for migrating, the stage of the lifecycle at which they move, the form of the migration (internal, international, temporary, and so on), and the nature and impact of global economic and political policies that affect population movement. A consideration of all these factors, from a comparative perspective, offers the best understanding of the process of migration and of migrant culture. It assumes that migrants act and are “acted upon” with reference to their social, cultural and gendered location.<sup>34</sup>

In general, migration itself rises up many obvious questions such as ‘Why people migrate? Why most people do not migrate? Why some people return and some do not?’ That is why it is often defined and analysed with respect to ‘push and pull factor system’. Simply said, on one side one has factors which drive people to leave the country of origin. They can be of social, economic or political character. On the other side, one has pull factors which attract people to move to a new destination country.

As I am planning to be focused also on reasons and motives for migration it is necessary to mention that there are theories dealing with the topic of “migrant decision making”. In this part I will concentrate on the definition of meso-level which can be understood as:

The arena where potential migrants receive their socialization, have to come to terms with larger socioeconomic forces, and live, act, and feel as community and family members, where migrants act out aspirations and values and pursue customs or choose innovative strategies. This level comprises, first, family economies as well as kin and friendship networks, in

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<sup>34</sup> Brettel, C. B. (2000). *Theorizing Migration in Anthropology: The Social Construction of Networks, Identities, Communities and Globalscapes*. p. 118

which information is digested, decisions are made, and the interests of group members are weighed and, ideally, are balanced.<sup>35</sup>

There have been significant changes in international migration in the late twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the number of international migrants has approximately doubled in the last 25 years.<sup>36</sup> Baláž and Williams mention in their book that

One of the most marked changes has been an increase in skilled international migration. In part this was a response to changes in the world economy and in part a response to the redrafting of national immigration systems in favour of 'skilled' as opposed to 'unskilled' migrants. Most of the world's leading economies have actively sought to attract skilled international migrants.<sup>37</sup>

Migration is not, let us say, individualist phenomenon. In other words, it is not only about the decision of the individual to go; it affects whole families and networks. It very often means the change of roles and tasks for those who move but also for those who stay. Tomas Hammar and Kristof Tamas write that

Migration may entail the reallocation of responsibilities, which ultimately impact on the roles and status of household members. In the absence of male adult members of the household, the gendered division of labour may change, as woman may take over additional roles, or vice versa.”<sup>38</sup>

Science in general tends to categorize so people who migrate can be divided into groups according to certain criteria (such as purpose of migration, length of stay in a destination country or frequency of migrating). These definitions are especially important because one can see a significant difference in, for instance, social meanings of migration in various contexts. Stephen Castles in his article<sup>39</sup> mentions 8 groups of migrants. I am presenting a brief description in following lines.

Firstly, there are temporary labour migrants who are known also as guest-workers or overseas contract workers. These people migrate for a limited time only and their goal is to get a job in a destinations country and send remittances home. Secondly, there are highly skilled and business migrants. They are highly educated and qualified. Many

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Williams, A. M., Baláž V. (2008). *International Migration and Knowledge*. p. 83

<sup>37</sup> Williams, A. M., Baláž V. (2008). *International Migration and Knowledge*. p. 85

<sup>38</sup> Faist, T. (1997). The Crucial Meso-level. In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. p. 213

<sup>39</sup> Castels, S. (2000). *International Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: Global Trends and Issues*. pp. 270-271

countries implemented special programmes in order to attract these migrants. Third group is known as irregular migrants (undocumented or illegal migrants). These people usually enter a destination country and search for employment without necessary documents and permits. Fourthly, one can name refugees. According to the 1951 United Nations Convention refugee is “a person residing outside his or her country of nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return because of a ‘well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion’.”<sup>40</sup> Another category is asylum-seekers. These migrants do not fulfil the strict criteria set by 1951 United Nations Convention but in fact are in a similar situation as refugees. Next, there are return migrants which return to their country of origin after certain period in another country. Last to groups are known as family members (family reunion or family reunification migrants) and forced migrants. These people are pushed to migrate by environmental changes or development projects. Refugees and asylum seekers can be sometimes included into this group as well.<sup>41</sup>

As I mention above migration is a complex phenomenon which is based on interconnection of many attributes, there are also different types of migration as well as different perspectives how one can understand certain facts. For purposes of my paper, I have chosen to put a special emphasis on reasons of migration, return migration, immigration to Stavanger, culture, identity and home because I believe they are key factors for answering my research questions.

#### **4.1.1 Reasons for Migration**

Why people move in general? Many possible explanations have been discussed in order to answer this question. However, causes of international migration are usually quite complex and decision to go depends on more than one factor. Most theories have something in common, to be more precise they are based on: “the belief that differences in environmental macro-factors of geo-political spatial units (countries, regions,

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<sup>40</sup> Castels, S. (2000). *International Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: Global Trends and Issues*. p. 270

<sup>41</sup> Castels, S. (2000). *International Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: Global Trends and Issues*. p. 271

locations) influence people's decision to migrate and thereby cause migration. The exact form of these differences, however, can vary."<sup>42</sup>

Stephen Castles with reference to the book *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture* by David Held et al. write:

International migration is an integral part of globalisation, which may be characterised as the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of social life. The key indicator of globalisation is the rapid increase in cross-border flows of all sorts: finance, trade, ideas, pollution, media products and people. The key organising structure for all these flows is the transnational network...<sup>43</sup>

The most obvious causes of migration are inequality in levels of income, employment and social well-being between country of origin and destination country. In the decision to go demographic patterns, such as fertility, mortality, age-structure or labour-force growth, play also an important role.<sup>44</sup> Thomas Faist adds: "Decisions over moving or staying made by families and individuals not only influence later decisions made by other individuals and households but also the long-term social and economic arrangements within the families, households and the sending communities."<sup>45</sup> That explains big migration waves which often occur.

Family motives for migration have been subject to a large number of empirical investigations and researchers came with various conclusions supporting decision go or to stay. For example, several studies verified that married persons are less likely to move than singles. Fisher et al. emphasizes that "this reluctance to migrate is even stronger if the spouse is attached to the labour market."<sup>46</sup> In other words married persons and other individuals attached to someone else are less likely to decide for migration. On the other hand, migrations of whole families are not rare. In my case studies later in the paper I will present various options (people with different family background).

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<sup>42</sup> Fisher, P. A., Martin, R., Straubhaar (1997). Should I Stay or Should I Go? . In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, & T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives* p. 49

<sup>43</sup> Castles, S. (2000). International Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: Global Trends and Issues, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*. p. 271

<sup>44</sup> Castles, S. (2000). International Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: Global Trends and Issues, *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*. p. 272

<sup>45</sup> Faist, T. (1997). The Crucial Meso-level. In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, & T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. p. 212

<sup>46</sup> Fisher, P. A., Martin, R., Straubhaar (1997). Should I Stay or Should I Go? In *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. p. 71

Economic situation of individual or family is often major. It worth mentioning, that “for large parts of the population the only chance to obtain capital even for modest investments may be remittances from migrating family members.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, New Economics of Migration specifies:

Migration based on family decisions is not only a rational way in which to increase the family’s income, it can also be regarded as a form of risk sharing. By locating different members of the social group in different areas and in different labour markets and occupations, the group is able to reduce the overall risks of unemployment, wage-level reductions and so on.<sup>48</sup>

Some of immigrants I had my interviews with, one can call highly skilled migrants/workers. The reasons of migration for them can vary from general causes or can be extended to a certain point. The concept of highly skilled migration is rather complex and difficult to define. Many researchers agree that a tertiary education (e. g. a university degree) should be the norm for defining highly skilled migrants. That is, a migrant with Bachelors’s degree or post-tertiary education with a Master’s or a Doctorate degree would typically be considered as highly skilled. But this definition is problematic because educational degrees are not always easily transferable between countries, and a migrant with a graduate degree might work as a cab driver, because the degree obtained in the native country is not accepted in the host country.<sup>49</sup> With regard to reasons to migrate for this group of people Astrid Eich-Krohm explains that highly skilled migrants who move with their families usually see their temporary stay in a new destination as an opportunity for their kids to grow up in a global world.<sup>50</sup> She underlines in her article especially five motivations for the highly skilled to migrate:

(1) the desire for better living conditions; (2) improvement in work and research conditions (i.e., including funding, research facilities, equipment, books, and libraries); (3) better educational sources for children; (4) greater political conditions; and, (5) more employment opportunities, especially if the home country does not have enough jobs for the highly trained, or it does not offer social mobility.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Fisher, P. A., Martin, R., Straubhaar (1997). Should I Stay or Should I Go? In *International Migration, Immobility and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. p. 70

<sup>49</sup> Eich-Krohm, A. (2013). Twenty-first-century trends in highly skilled migration. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Migration*. p. 154

<sup>50</sup> Eich-Krohm, A. (2013). Twenty-first-century trends in highly skilled migration. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Migration*. p.156

<sup>51</sup> Eich-Krohm, A. (2013). Twenty-first-century trends in highly skilled migration. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Migration*. p.157

The economic argument particularly dominates research discussions of the highly skilled.

#### 4.1.2 Return Migration

Return migration forms a significant part of the flow of human migrations and the spread of cultures around the today's world. One can find first attempts of conceptualizing return migration in the 1960s but the biggest boom and most debates among scholars went through this phenomenon during the 1980s.<sup>52</sup> As well as in other migration issues, return migration can be defined within the context of certain main migration theories. As I mentioned above, I am putting a special emphasis on the New Economic of Migration and with regard to this approach return migration is "the logical outcome of a 'calculated strategy', defined at the level of migrant's household, and resulting from the successful achievement of goals or target."<sup>53</sup> Thus, there is a significant move from individual independence to mutual interdependence at the level of family (or household).<sup>54</sup>

Return is seen "as the natural outcome of a successful experience abroad during which migrants meet their goals (i.e. higher incomes and accumulation of savings) while naturally remitting part of their income to the household."<sup>55</sup>

Return migration, in fact, improves skills of migrants. Firstly because migration experience increases their level of socialization, secondly they actively search for on-the-job training or gaining additional skills. All this they usually do in order to raise the probability of return. Jean-Pierre Cassarino writes:

Migrants go abroad for a limited period of time, until they succeed in providing their households with the liquidity and income they expect to earn. The planning of the migration project has a bearing on the behavioural patterns of the migrant in the host society, as well as on professional advancement.<sup>56</sup>

Neoclassical Economics and New Economics of (Labour) Migration share many similar ideas but an approach towards return migration differs significantly. In Neoclassical

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<sup>52</sup> Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *Intercultural Journal on Multicultural Societies*. p. 254

<sup>53</sup> Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *Intercultural Journal on Multicultural Societies*. p. 255

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Cassarino, J. P. (2004). Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *Intercultural Journal on Multicultural Societies*. p. 256

Economics return migration is interpreted as a failure as people move permanently to maximise their wages in receiving society, while New Economics of Migration presents that people actually do not move permanently to achieve their targets. Return migration is thus understood as ‘successful story’ or let us say a logical outcome.<sup>57</sup>

Williams and Baláž also deal with an issue of benefits for a country of origin when migrants return back and the length of their stay abroad. In case of highly skilled migrants they see the maximum profit for the country of origin when the migrants leave for relatively short period (10-15 years) and come back with financial, human and social capital.<sup>58</sup>

Return of migrants to their country of origin can be often a driving force for the next ‘generation’ of migrants. Information as well as shared experience might influence the decision to go. Thomas Faist supports this statement:

Those not yet migrating need to receive information from earlier migrants, or even to see the concrete results of the ventures of those who migrated before. Therefore, (pioneer) return migrants play an important role in spreading information on opportunities regarding where to go, work and live.<sup>59</sup>

The image of home and the thought of coming home one day play a major role in migrants’ lives. Scientists that study return migration pays special attention to emigrants’ social-psychological identities. They note that migrants have many ideological and mental associations with home.<sup>60</sup> This idealization is an interesting point in my interviews as well.

Last but not least, although all mentioned above provides a clear definition, as well as other approaches New Economics of Migration has shortcomings in its conceptualizing of return migration. One of them could be determined as too excessive emphasis on financial factors and not dealing with other options. Another one is that there is no focus on the environment where migrants actually return (such as social, political or economic environment). This can be limiting so I am trying to mention also these attributes in my paper.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Williams, A. M., Baláž V. (2008). *International Migration and Knowledge*. p. 97

<sup>59</sup> Faist, T. (1997). The Crucial Meso-level. In T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, & T. Faist, *International Migration, Immobility and Development: multidisciplinary perspectives*. p. 209

<sup>60</sup> Salaff, J. W. (2013). Return Migration. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Migration*. p. 463



### 4.1.3 Immigration to Stavanger

Norway is being well known as a country friendly to immigrants. Wealth, safety as well as well working welfare system entices many people to try living in Norway in spite of a cold weather and not ideal geographical position. The recent statistics show that there are approximately 12 per cent of immigrants. To be more specific, Statistics Norway presents that

The number of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents grew by 55 300 in 2012, which is the highest growth ever. At the beginning of 2013, there were 593 300 immigrants and 117 100 Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in Norway. Immigrants have a background from 220 different countries and independent regions.<sup>61</sup>

According to the same source, there were 25 500 new labour immigrants in 2012.<sup>62</sup>

In Stavanger, this trend is followed, too and the number of immigrants is even higher than the nationwide average. Latest Stavanger kommune statistics show that immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents account for approximately one fifth of Stavanger population now days.<sup>63</sup>

Why there are so many immigrants in Stavanger? What attracts people to move to this fast-growing city? Is migration to Stavanger somehow specific and what is it influenced by? Let us start with a brief description of Stavanger. Stavanger is the fourth largest city in Norway. In January 2014 there were 130 754 inhabitants whereof 26 054 are immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. The biggest number of people comes from Poland, the United Kingdom, Turkey, India and Sweden (followed by Germany, Somalia, Denmark, Russia and the US).<sup>64</sup>

In former times Stavanger industry was based on export of fish and fish products, building of boats and shipping. The situation changed dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s due to discovery of oil in the North Sea. Stavanger is situated close to oil fields, it has its own airport and harbour, and thus it took the advantage of a new expanding business. It has slowly become the oil capital of Norway. In other words, an oil and gas industry is a backbone of Stavanger's economy now days; the energy sector is

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<sup>61</sup> SSB (2013). *Population projections, immigrants and Norwegian-born with immigrant parents, 2010-2060*

<sup>62</sup> SSB (2013). *Immigrants by reason for immigration*

<sup>63</sup> Stavanger-statistikken (2014). *Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrereforeldre*

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

internationally acknowledged when it comes to health, environment, safety and security.<sup>65</sup> One can find many Norwegian as well as international companies in Stavanger.

They create profit and also job opportunities. As an example one can name state-owned oil company Statoil which is currently the largest oil company in Stavanger. There are many more oil and oil service companies, for instance Wintershall, Shell, Conoco Phillips, Lotos, E.ON, Schlumberger, BP, Weatherford, BG Group, Baker Hughes, Halliburton, Aker Solutions, Apply Sørco, National Oilwell Varco etc.

The change of cultural climate, establishing new spheres of businesses and services came along with improvement of financial situation of the city.<sup>66</sup> There is space and wherewithal to develop living environment in Stavanger and this might be one of the reasons for attracting immigrants.

Other possible explanation of an upward tendency to migrate to Stavanger is a low unemployment rate which could be perceived as a good environment for job seekers. In January 2014 the unemployment rate was 3, 6 per cent in Norway, in Stavanger this number was even lower – 1, 9 per cent,<sup>67</sup> which is significantly less than European as well as Norwegian average.

Stavanger kommune in its last statistics mentions that there are currently 142 nationalities<sup>68</sup> in Stavanger. This fact is reflected into multicultural character of the city. Moreover, English is commonly used language within Norwegian society and it makes the situation for foreigners easier at least at the beginning of their stay in a new destination. Because of high concentration of immigrants one can find in Stavanger also various kinds of services which are held in English – such as swimming classes, personal trainers in gym, pet and babysitters, theatre plays, birth courses etc. Working language of some companies (mainly oil companies) is English as well. There is also British International School of Stavanger and International School of Stavanger. University of Stavanger and other institutions also offer bachelor and MA programs in

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<sup>65</sup> Greater Stavanger (???). *Stavanger Region*

<sup>66</sup> Stavanger-statistiken (2013). *Arbeidsløse*

<sup>67</sup> Stavanger-statistiken (2013). *Arbeidsløshet*

<sup>68</sup> Stavanger-statistiken (2014). *Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrereforeldre*

English, thus the full range of education is covered. The NATO Joint Warfare Centre is also located in Stavanger.

In contrast to all mentioned above, weather in Stavanger can discourage some migrants from coming. The climate is rather windy and precipitation amount is 1180 mm/year. Peter A. Fisher et al. write: “Good climate can in some cases be a perfectly valid reason to move to a different place.”<sup>69</sup> This opposes Norwegian saying ‘There is no such thing as bad weather – only bad clothing!’

Another let us say unpleasant factor is that life in Stavanger is very expensive. Prices in Stavanger housing market sometimes surpass prices in Oslo. Statistics from the year 2013 show that 1 square meter of the apartment (80m<sup>2</sup>) costs 46 500 NOK (while in Oslo it is 46 800NOK).<sup>70</sup>

## 4.2 Culture

Over the past few decades the term ‘culture’ went through many significant modifications. In the nineteenth century ‘culture’ was commonly used as a synonym for Western society, later culture corresponded with borders of countries, and now days cultures are not synonymous with countries anymore and are not limited by political boundaries. One can even describe the world and history with regard to a culture perspective. Holliday and Kullman point out

Human history is in part the story of the ways different cultural groups have rearranged cultural boundaries by expanding contacts, tolerating outsiders, and fashioning interactive arrangements. Even this creation of stricter boundaries involves mutual impact. The human world is not composed of motley of independent, encapsulated, free-floating cultures; it is one of constant interplay and exchange...<sup>71</sup>

Simply said, cultures are essentially open. Migration thus affects cultures due to supply and exchange of information from one culture to another one. Cultures are not integrated or homogeneous unities. In other words, cultures interfere to a certain point and it is more significant now days in the globalized world than ever before. Adrian

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<sup>69</sup> Fisher, P. A., Martin, R., Straubhaar (1997). Should I Stay or Should I Go? *In International Migration, Immobility and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. p.49

<sup>70</sup> Stavanger-statistikken (2013). *Boligpriser*

<sup>71</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 61

Holliday explains further: “Cultures are ideational entities; as such they are permeable, susceptible to influence from other cultures. Whatever exchange among humans occurs, the possibility exists of the influence of one culture by another.”<sup>72</sup>

Culture is the foundation on which we act and there exist thousands variations of its concept. For example

A culture is a complex set of shared beliefs, values, and concepts which enables a group to make sense of its life which provides it with directions for how to live. This set might be called a basic belief system (note that such a belief system can include items which are fully explicit and others which are not, and can include matters of feeling and deportment as well as discursive claims about the world).<sup>73</sup>

Another description can be: “culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”<sup>74</sup> To be more demonstrative, one has to think of culture in a way of essential obtained information and knowledge which provide the feeling of being sure and confident, in other words not like a stranger in a foreign place. Further, to understand the culture of individual requires the knowledge of personal appearance and many other qualities. I would like to sum up main cultural resources how they are presented in Holliday’s book. He writes: “By cultural resources one means aspects of culture that exist in our society, which one can draw on at different times and for different resources.”<sup>75</sup> They are namely: ceremonies, clothing, etiquette, family, festivals, fine arts, food, ideology, language, literature, music, personality and religion.

Culture is not a genetic attribute. It is a social construct and it is constantly negotiated. All cultural elements are learned through interaction with others within the culture. Moreover, one cannot have any direct knowledge of a culture other than his/her own. Fred E. Jandt goes deeper and presents an example

Our experience with and knowledge of other cultures is limited by the perceptual bias of our own culture. An adult Canadian will never fully understand the experience of growing up an Australian. To begin to

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<sup>72</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 61

<sup>73</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 60

<sup>74</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 59

<sup>75</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 13

understand a culture, you need to understand all the experiences that guide its individual members through life...<sup>76</sup>

Although the definitions and outlines I have chosen for my paper seem to be clear and simple, there are also pitfalls while conceptualizing culture as a phenomenon. It is important to consider as many aspects as possible otherwise the concept might be unsatisfactory or inadequate and it can lead to wrong conclusions while it is applied. For instance, functionalists perceive culture as

...Background and resource where the human subject is only seen in his/her role of executor of functions. Culture thus comes to be viewed too simply as either behaviour (e. g. x people do not smile in public), or as fixed values and beliefs, separated from social interaction and socio-political realities (e.g. x cultural values the elderly).<sup>77</sup>

But why am I am dealing here with the topic of culture in general? I believe that some answers, opinions and emotions which appeared in my interviews with migrants can be based on cultural differences. Culture has a great effect on the perception processes. Moreover, some interviewees were aware of this issue and even called certain issues cultural difference, some did not use this term directly but in fact described the same. Also the replies I gained in interviews might be themselves influenced by culture of individuals as, for example, it might not be socially acceptable to complain or to speak openly about struggling or success.

### 4.3 Identity

Just like the tern ‘culture’, ‘identity’ has many different meanings. With regard to migration one often refers ‘identity’ as ‘cultural identity’ which makes reference to social identity that: “is based on a specific cultural configuration of a conscious nature. History, language and race are possible bases for cultural identity and they are socially constructed...”<sup>78</sup> Holliday, Kulmann and Hyde highlight an interconnection of identity and culture as well:

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<sup>76</sup> Jandt, F. E. (2007). *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*. p. 7

<sup>77</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 61

<sup>78</sup> Jensen, I. (2003). The practice of Intercultural Communication. *The Electronic Journal of Intercultural Communication*. p. 11

The term 'identity' defies precise definition and crosses traditional boundaries between disciplines in the social sciences. Increasingly in recent years there has been an emphasis on the interrelationship of culture and *identity*, as well as on the longer-established emphasis interrelationship between culture and *behaviour*.<sup>79</sup>

On top of that, Thomas Faist mentions in his article *Transnationalism*, that there has been noticed a significant difference in migrants in the past and now days (according to various researchers, e. g. Glick Schiller). He writes that one side one has earlier era's immigrants

Having broken off all homeland social relations and cultural ties, thereby locating themselves solely within the socio-cultural, economic, and political orbit of the receiving society...By contrast, today's immigrants are composed of whose networks, activities, and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies.<sup>80</sup>

This fact meant an important shift in understanding of migration and migrants in general and gave latitude to the new term 'transnationalism', and subsequently 'transmigrants'. . Not all migrants are transmigrants but it is important to bear in mind that among those who are: "the contemporary tendency to maintain, build and reinforce multiple linkages is not new; it is facilitated rather than produced by new opportunities in bridging time and space thanks to new communication and transportation technologies."<sup>81</sup>

Clearly this transnationalist theory was not only the new designation, rather a complex concept dealing with all issues migration includes. One of the main themes which had to be redefined was identity. Construction of identity of people who live their lives as immigrants in a host society now days is affected by factors which were not considered in previous concepts such as development of modern technology – media, fast and relatively cheap travelling by planes, easier accessibility of information and so on. Identities of contemporary migrants are fluid and often multiple. A person's identity is embedded in lived structures in many ways, affecting everyday life and the sociocultural realities in which those lives are lived. One's identity is not given and is consisted of different (often even contradictory) identities at different points of time. By contrast it is important to mention that people feel that they have one unified identity

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<sup>79</sup> Holliday, A., Hyde, M. and Kullman, J. (2004). *Intercultural Communication: An Advanced Resource Book*. p. 66

<sup>80</sup> Faist, T. (2013). Transnationalism. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Migration*. p.450

<sup>81</sup> Morokvasic, M. (2003). Transnational Mobility and Gender: A View from Post-Wall Europe. In *Crossing Borders and Shifting Boundaries*. p. 116

whole life from birth to death. Iben Jensen explains that it is only because of a construction of a comforting story or ‘narrative of the self’ about ourselves.<sup>82</sup>

Today’s understanding of cultural identity is not delimited by race, ethnicity or nation, rather includes different identity categories like for example gender, work, hobby and so on. It is important especially because of not creating hierarchic structures and avoiding having one determining identity which could be limiting and in some cases misleading for intercultural communication. National identity is not the primary identity in the globalized world anymore but often plays an important role for the feeling of belonging and along with culture affects assimilation processes and construction of identity in general.

## 4.4 Home

In the traditional settler migration model, the term ‘home’ commonly refers to migrants’ country of origin. In today’s highly globalised world however, migrants can have ongoing attachment to their societies of origin and destination and thus can have different perceptions of what the term ‘home’ means.<sup>83</sup>

Already the quotation above indicates that perception of home is probably one of the most personal issues related to my Thesis, thus the definition is highly individual. That is the reason why the actual term ‘home’ is a part of my research question. However, there are sources which provide general comprehensive overview of possible perspectives one can apply while framing this concept. It can be defined using different aspects of life, for instance, partnership, friendship, family relations, networks, work opportunities, current/previous migration experience or can be based just on values of individuals or feeling of belonging. Annika Philipp and Elsie Ho add that: “Clearly, the things that can make migrants feel at home or not at home are varied, and can change over time, as are reflections about where home is.”<sup>84</sup>

This phenomenon has been always an attractive topic to talk or write about. As evidence from history one can see, for example, Homer’s epic poem *Odyssey* which has been

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<sup>82</sup> Jensen, I. (2003). The practice of Intercultural Communication. *The Electronic Journal of Intercultural Communication*. p. 12

<sup>83</sup> Philipp, A., Ho, E. (2010). *Migration, Home and Belonging: South African Migrant Women in Hamilton, New Zealand*. p. 81

<sup>84</sup> Philipp, A., Ho, E. (2010). *Migration, Home and Belonging: South African Migrant Women in Hamilton, New Zealand*. p. 83

created around 1000 B.C. It deals, among other things, with the feelings of the Greek king Odysseus when he returns to his homeland - island Ithaca after spending many years in exile due to Trojan War. He is back in Ithaca but he struggles a lot because he does not feel like he is home although the thought of his comeback was his motivation and power-giving-tool when he was abroad. Suddenly, he feels like he should be happy but he is not, everything is different. He has certain images in his head from before but they are not valid any more. Simply said, he lost home, although same people, landscape etc. are still there. There was no way how to get 'his home' back after experiencing years away.

More recent sources dealing with the same theme can be found as well. For instance, Czech famous emigrant and well known writer Milan Kundera in his novel *Ignorance* describes the feelings of two emigrants, who are coming back to their country of origin (former Czechoslovakia) after the year 1989 and the fall of communist regime. Irena (living in France) and Josef (living in Denmark) find out that it is actually impossible to return. They little by little uncover that they will probably always be foreigners in the countries they emigrated to but also in the country where they are born and where they grew up. The physical return was finally possible after all those years in exile, the mental return was not. Their bonds with original homeland were severed, the roots were pulled out.

Romanian author with Jewish roots Norman Manea in his autobiographical novel *The Hooligan's Return* describes impracticability to find home after the fall of communist regime as well. The book is basically the journey of searching for own identity influenced by migration and return, prejudice and importance of the language. Norman Manea suggests that right language, to be more specific – mother tongue - might be 'home' which everyone carries anywhere they move.

Jiří Pehe in his article *Globální bezdomovectví vyprazdňuje náš lidský svět*<sup>85</sup> (in English *Global homelessness exhausts our human world*) mentions also another novel *Zjasněná noc* by Libuše Moníková where the main character (Leonora Marty) struggles with her feelings when she comes back shortly to her motherland as nothing seems to be familiar anymore. Not only the landscape and environment looks different in her eyes but also

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<sup>85</sup> Pehe, J. (2013). *Globální bezdomovectví vyprazdňuje náš lidský svět*



people have changed a lot. She does not understand them, she is not understood either. Her 'home' suddenly does not exist anymore.

In the scientific literature there are often mention 2 main perspectives related to the topic 'home'. Sara Ahmed sums them up in her *Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement*<sup>86</sup> as 'being at home' on one hand, 'leaving home' on the other hand.

Family is often crucial in migrants' perception or establishing of 'new' home as family ties play an important role in identity construction. Annika Philipp and Elsie Ho write

Social relations, namely family ties, networks of friends or other migrants can further contribute to the establishment of a sense of home in the country of destination. At the same time, however, ties to family members left behind and amongst members of the migrating group, can be a source of struggle and tension...<sup>87</sup>

Individuals need to belong somewhere – to the certain place, into a certain group and need to be aware of that. What this mentioned feeling of belonging means? The famous anthropologist Nina Glick-Schiller links this term to transnationalism and practices of identities which demonstrate right a conscious connection to a particular group.<sup>88</sup>

Here one could suggest also other angles like possible differences in perception of home for first generation and second generation of migrants, prospective differences in voluntary/involuntary migration and perception of home, the reasons why some people tend to displace bad memories about the country of origin if they cannot return, the role of home in the process of construction of identity etc. There are many ways how to assess this topic. But what is the perception of home for my interviewees like? That is the question of my interest for this Thesis.

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<sup>86</sup> Ahmed, S. (1999). *Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement*.

<sup>87</sup> Philipp, A., Ho, E. (2010). *Migration, Home and Belonging: South African Migrant Women in Hamilton, New Zealand*. p. 83

<sup>88</sup> Levitt, P. (2004). *Transnational Migrants: When 'Home' Means More Than One Country*.

## 5 Empirical Findings

In this chapter I will present case studies that are based on interviews which I conducted with 10 people currently living in Stavanger, coming from 10 different countries, having different occupation or education. All of them belong to the age group 25-37. I am using fake names and gender switches (and consequently switches like husband/wife) in some cases in order to protect my interviewees' identities. Countries of origin and the background such as general education level<sup>89</sup>, having or not having kids or relationship plays an important role in the life stories as well as for purposes of my Thesis. The new economics of migration approach put a special emphasis on these attributes while doing a research, too. Those are the reasons why I have decided to mention these facts unchanged with a permission of all my interviewees.

As an introduction I would like to present numbers of immigrants in Stavanger which come from the same countries of origin as my interviewees. There are 53 people from Belgium, 92 people from the Czech Republic, 536 people from France, 42 people from Japan, 662 people from Lithuania, 75 people from Malaysia, 35 people from New Zealand, 3 people from Nicaragua, 96 people from Portugal, and 534 people from Vietnam registered.<sup>90</sup>

### 5.1 Case study 1 (Belgium)

Name: Renate

Country of origin: Belgium

Came to Stavanger: 2 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): yes

Education: tertiary

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<sup>89</sup> I am using upper secondary educations (which is specialized, usually beginning at age 15 years and is a preparation for tertiary education, or provides skills relevant to employment, or both) and tertiary education (which the third stage education, refers to higher or university education and successfully ends by getting certificate, diploma or academic degree).

<sup>90</sup>SSB (2013). *Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre*

Occupation: public sector

Belgium is a federal monarchy in Western Europe. Most Belgians perceive their culture as a part of multinational European culture; however there are two domain cultural communities (Flemish – speaking Dutch and Walloons – speaking French). Ethnic minorities (for instance Jews) have been mingling their traditions and customs with Belgian culture for centuries. As well as other cultures around the world, the Belgian one is strongly affected by global trends and migration now days.

Renate moved to Stavanger almost two years ago. At the moment, she feels she is already integrated as she speaks Norwegian, has a job and is at home here. She calls herself a happy person as she has everything she needs now. She thinks that Stavanger is a good place for children and it is important for her. She also highlights nice nature, safe environment, opportunities to earn good money. According to her, just this financial aspect actually allows people living in Norway to travel more because they can afford it. She likes travelling so it is highly positive for her, it brings more flexibility. However, there are certain points in her life which could make her even more satisfied. Firstly, she considers the size of the city too small. Secondly, she does not like ‘Norwegian drinking culture’. She says: “It is common in my country to enjoy alcohol as well but it is taken much more as a ‘social thing’. People do not tend to get wasted like it is possible to see here often.” Thirdly, she feels sometimes a little bit isolated. Before she moved to Stavanger, she used to travel a lot, for example, by train. She points out: “Stavanger as well as Norway in general does not have really the most perfect location. It makes ‘quick unplanned trips’ much more difficult than in other European countries. Everything is too far.” Fourthly, she misses “good cheese and veggie stuff.” Last but not least, Renate mentions that Stavanger is very expensive so it is not so easy for her friends to come to visit her. At the same time she cannot go out as much as she wants to because of prices and thus she sees herself less sociable than before.

Renate had a previous experience with migration before. She studied in Russia for almost half a year. She can speak English, Norwegian, French, and Dutch fluently and is able to communicate in German and Spanish and one could expect that she would have big chances to find friends here. The situation is different though:

My real friends are somewhere else. I mean people who know everything about me and I know everything about them. I met here many people from abroad as well as from Norway but there has never been 'the true connection'. You know, that feeling of being on the same wavelength."

She has friends all over the world as everyone moved somewhere from Belgium. In Stavanger, she does not tend to meet Belgians. "In fact, I have not met anyone from Belgium here so far." She spends most of her spare time with the family of her partner. She believes it has a positive influence on her fast language learning. She tried to speak Norwegian with her partner's family from the beginning. Now days, she sometimes speaks Norwegian also with her partner if the occasion requires that. Another factor which was important for learning Norwegian was that Dutch is very similar. "In fact, also the mentality of people in my country and in Norway is similar. It is probably reflected also in the language and it can be the reason why I got into that so quickly." Although she speaks Norwegian she is persuaded that people can live in Stavanger comfortably with English only.

In my opinion it depends on a partner and his nationality. Stavanger is really multicultural but I think that people who speak Norwegian have it much easier here. It is like a sign that you take your stay here seriously and Norwegians appreciate it and try to help you more if you show an effort.

Perception of home can vary a lot. For Renate home is Stavanger. She explains: "My home is here now because my partner and child are here. We live together here. It is my base now. I also have a job here. I feel comfortable and relaxed." That is how she sees the situation now but at the very beginning when Renate and her partner started to consider moving to Stavanger, the plan was to stay for one year. Her partner got a good offer to join a project in Stavanger where he comes from. After some time, the situation has changed because of other interesting work opportunities. They both started successful careers and wanted to keep on going. Now they are planning to stay for couple of years but definitely for the rest of their life.

Renate explains: "I am not a person who is keen on one place. I need a change. We are talking about Holland a lot. It is good because of the language<sup>91</sup> and it is kind of in the middle – close to Norway as well as Belgium." Regarding to attitude of her family and her decision to migrate she says:

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<sup>91</sup> Renate's partner is fluent in Dutch as well.

They saw it coming and they were fine. Of course, they miss me and I miss them but they see me happy so they do not complain. When we got a baby I started to be a bit sad though. Not because of me as this was my decision but because of my child. He cannot see my parents and siblings as often as I wish.

Also practical things like, for example, babysitting can appear if one is an immigrant. Renate says that it is alright for them as they have her partner's family here but sometimes she feels a bit limited anyway. At the same time, having at least some of family members can make the person more "lazy to actively search for own networks and friends." She thinks that is just her case.

## **5.2 Case study 2 (Czech Republic)**

Name: Petr

Country of origin: Czech Republic

Came to Stavanger: 4 years ago

Marital status: single

Kid(s): no

Education: tertiary

Occupation: student and private sector (part-time)

The Czech Republic is a country in Central Europe, commonly called 'the heart of Europe'. There is a pluralist parliamentary representative democracy. From historical point of view, its culture as well as identity of Czechs was mainly constructed in contrast to Austria, Germany, former Soviet Union and Slovakia. Before the year 1989, when communist party was in force, former Czechoslovakia was a land of emigration. The situation has changed after the fall of communist regime and Czech culture has become influenced by freedom and economic development and a new wave of immigration, although, in general, Czech society is quite homogeneous comparing to other countries. The Czech Republic has one of the least religious populations in the world. Czech culture is based on family values, important historical events, logical,

practical and efficient thinking and careful planning (which can be sometimes understood as a consequence of years in communism).

Four years ago Petr was searching for a new job. He was open also to a possibility to try his chances abroad. He had never been abroad for a longer period. That time, he always wanted to see Norway so he bought a ticket. Initially, he was planning to go for a trip there but he started to check also job opportunities and other related offers in Norway. He attended a short Norwegian course as well to get basic knowledge of the language in order to be able to communicate in case that some work occurs. A couple of days before his departure he found someone who just had a free room for a nice price in Stavanger. He says: "I did not have any commitments in the Czech Republic and needed a new job so I decided to take it. I replied to that guy with a free room and suddenly I was moving to Stavanger." In other words, in Petr's case the choice of Stavanger was a matter of coincidence. Currently, he does not regret his decision. "I am, let us say, 80% happy here. The culture is quite different though. Some approaches I like, other I do not like at all". He goes further:

I really do not like that people here avoid solving conflicts. In most cases it ends up by having a big problem afterwards which could be fixed easily at the beginning. This lax attitude can be seen also at approach to work. On one hand it is positive because people are not so stressed; on the other hand it is a bit irritating as it decreases efficiency.

Although he sees Norwegian society quite open to foreigners, he feels distance which actually works as a unifying tool for immigrants in Norway. He explains: "Norwegians are quite stand-offish at the beginning but friendly when you get know each other. This reserved attitude makes foreigners to feel like being in the same situation so I think they tend to look for friends among other immigrants." Petr manage to develop already some relationships with the shift from only knowing some people to calling them friends. Currently, he has friends among immigrants as well as Norwegians but foreigners prevail. He managed to build up networks here through his studies (classmates etc.) as well as through work (colleagues). He points out:

I believe that religion is one of the key factors of my integration. At the beginning it helped me a lot to go to church because I got know many new people there and they were interested in new people. It was easier for me to approach them in this way. Another thing is definitely an importance to speak Norwegian. It, let us say, opens the doors.

Petr speaks Czech, English, and Norwegian and he is able to communicate in German as well. One year after his arrival to Stavanger he started to take Norwegian course once a week. As he studies in Norwegian currently, he had to do the exam in order to prove a level of his Norwegian. Although he passed he adds: “I still do not feel very confident in the language. If I need to discuss something important I tend to speak English. I also still feel tired after school because I have to concentrate on Norwegian a lot. Hope it will change soon.”

He mentioned that he used to live with Czechs at the beginning of the stay in Stavanger. Retrospectively, he sees that as a big mistake which made him slower. “It was really ‘disintegrative’. I would not go for it again if I had a chance to decide again.” Now days, he does not tend to meet Czechs in Stavanger but he misses his friends from the Czech Republic. He explains:

I lost my closest people when I went to Norway. Not really because of the actual geographical distance, rather than new experience I got. In fact we did not have so much in common any more, my worldview has changed a lot, and I had to face different problems than they did. It developed some kind of a gap between us and seems that we are not able to overcome it.

This feeling of having loved people around plays an important role for Petr’s perception of home. In his opinion home has many dimensions. There are also other factors which make person feel like at home like, for instance, a safe place and self-fulfilment which is currently missing in Petr’s life.

In fact I have a really strange perception of home now. When I am in the Czech Republic, I feel like I am at home in Norway. But when I am in Stavanger, I feel like my home is in the Czech Republic. Weird! I am basically a homeless person. Or do I have more homes?

His misses also other, let us say, material or every-day-use things like ‘normal food’. He says:

I just have a feeling that everything tastes the same here. There are no various flavours. All pastry and bakery products are the same. Variety in food is not here. I am used to going to the shop and choosing from 30 different kinds of yoghurts, brands of milk and so on. Moreover, it is very expensive here.

Price of beer and the limited time when one can buy this alcoholic drink is something what he is not very happy about. On top of it, he thinks that this policy does not have a

desired effect which government expected. Drinking culture in Stavanger, when one can find dressed up young people lying in streets completely wasted, is almost scary. He adds: "They cannot handle alcohol here at all, and it can be partly a consequence of the strict law. Alcohol is seen as something what is difficult to get so for many especially young people it can be even more tempting," he speculates.

On the other hand, he highlights that in general, regulations and their control mostly work well and he perceives them as positive. People usually obey all different kinds of regulations and it creates safer environment, it is almost no crime here. He sums up: "If I should choose where I want to have my family one day, it would be probably here. People are positive and flexible that is in the contrast with the Czech society. Right now I feel like staying here. I do not want to return to the Czech Republic."

However, there is one big issue which he cannot deal with yet. He feels bad because of his mother. She is alone in the Czech Republic, Petr does not have siblings.

Sometimes I feel guilty I left. My mom is healthy now but what I will do in a couple of years if she needs me? I think she is not happy I live here although she was fine right after I left. We did not live together so it was not such a big difference at the beginning. Now she tends to 'blackmail me emotionally' and that is really frustrating.

Other members of his extended family are on his mother's side and cannot understand how he can be happy somewhere else. Their questions about the date of his return for good or advantages of the life in Stavanger which are among them absolutely trivial are discussed every time he goes down.

### **5.3 Case study 3 (France)**

Name: Sophia

Country of origin: France

Came to Stavanger: nearly 5 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): yes

Education: tertiary



Occupation: private sector

France is a sovereign country in Western Europe (which includes overseas territories as well). French culture has been formed by important historical events, geography as well as internal forces and groups, and last but not least, immigration. Especially Paris has played an important role as a heart of high culture for centuries. France is well known for its cuisine and fashion. Such as other cultures around the world the French one has been changing with regard to political, economic and military situation. Now days, one can see strong unifying tendencies and significant regional and socioeconomic differences.

Stavanger is the second destination in Norway for Sophia. Before she used to live in north for 2,5 years. She is happy in Stavanger because she likes the way of life here. She appraises highly positively the balance between work life and personal life which is possible. She have met interesting people so far and found new good friends. She is also satisfied with the flat she lives in with her family and all these factors contribute to her feeling of being like at home in Stavanger now. She adds:

We did not have any specific plans when we moved to Norway but now I can see that Stavanger is a good place for my child to grow up. It is good for a family life, for kids. It is easier to have some work as well. However, I am not sure if we stay here for good or if we move back to France. Will see...

Sophia has also another previous experience with migration; she used to live in the UK for a certain period of time because she got a job there. Then she moved to north of Norway as there were job opportunities for her and her partner. She did not really choose Stavanger, she followed her husband as he got even better offer there.

Sophia can speak French, English, Norwegian and a little bit German. Although she has been living in Norway for many years she does not feel very confident while using Norwegian language. She explains:

Maybe it is because I do not have so many Norwegian friends but those I have here, speak English. I work in a field where I do not need to speak Norwegian, it is an international company. Working language is English so I am not really forced to use Norwegian very much. However, I still think I have to overcome this fear if I want to live here for some time.

Apparently, she met more Norwegians who she calls friends in north than in Stavanger. In Stavanger, she tends to meeting foreigners mostly. "It is probably mainly because of

my job. There is my network. Moreover, Stavanger is multicultural and for some reason we always get invitations for some dinners, events and so on from foreigners. Norwegians are a bit more distant, I think.” She barely meets French people; it is rather coincidence than searching for them on purpose.

The attitude of people in Norway and in France is similar, in her opinion. This is probably another reason which helped her to feel like at home in Stavanger. She says:

There has never been any kind of cultural shock or something like that. There are certain habits which differ but it is small things like eating schedule and food in general. I have never experienced anything negative from people here with regard to the fact I am an immigrant. It is nice to be here now.

This might imply that she is planning to stay in Stavanger but it is not like that. In fact, she wants to move somewhere else. Moreover, she does not think she is integrated. She tells me: “Language is a key and I need to get better and have more Norwegian friends.”

Her family in France has always been supportive. They accept she lives somewhere else. They are happy that Sofia is doing fine and glad she does not live very far so they can visit each other often. “We are in touch often, Skype is a great thing!”

## **5.4 Case study 4 (Japan)**

Name: Masami

Country of origin: Japan

Came to Stavanger: 2 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): yes

Education: tertiary

Occupation: unemployed

Japan is an island country in East Asia. It is located in Pacific Ocean. Japanese culture has a long tradition although its temporary form is highly modified by mixture of North American, European and Asian influences. The location of this island state which is

relatively isolated from the outside world (supported even more significantly in certain periods by political situation) has an impact on culture as well. However, there has always been a noticeable influence from Chinese culture.

Masami is happy in Stavanger. She thinks the nature is beautiful, town is quiet, a good place for family life. Currently, she started to attend Norwegian classes and as she likes learning new languages. “I guess, I will have more fun here when I speak Norwegian,” she adds. So far, she speaks already Japanese, English, Dutch and Spanish. The reason for the selection of these languages is her previous experience with migration to Netherland and Spain. She believes:

You can live really comfortably in Stavanger without Norwegian or understanding the local culture but if you know it you can get also different joys. You enjoy local life and society and you do not feel like a tourist. It also opens the door for getting a good job.

In general, she experienced the biggest, let us say, cultural shock right after she moved to Europe. Masami says: “That was a big difference for me. There are very different traditions and culture in Asia. People behave according to different patterns. But to be honest, I prefer European style. After spending some time in Spain I knew I want to stay in Europe. I was lucky I met my husband there.” To be focused on Stavanger, she appreciates the honesty of people here.

In Japan it is inappropriate to say that you are not doing fine. People ask but they do not mean it. They are not really interested. It is more formal. Here, on the other hand, it is alright if one says, that he/she is not doing great, has problems and so on. I like it. The only problem is that Norwegians are usually quite reserved and difficult to be approached.

There are also other attributes which are different from what she was used to see, namely leaving unlocked cars, letting kids to sleep outside in a pram in kindergarten, high level of trust among people. She tells a story:

Once I went to the shop with a broken recharger for my laptop. I did not expect to get a temporary one from the retailer but he asked me right away if I want it. What was even more surprising for me is that he gave me one while saying I should give it back when mine is repaired. I was waiting for some paper to sign or something but he did not want anything. He just trusted me. That is nice.

On the other side, there are also things she does not like here like weather, food and culture in a way of being too reserved. The last mentioned is also maybe the reason

while she tends to meeting foreigners. Japanese community is in touch on regular base and she enjoys that. From her point of view, it is important for her children to talk Japanese, to be in contact with the Japanese culture. She admits that she misses some attributes of her culture, variety in food products as well as ‘coffee dates’ which she cannot afford very often because of local prices. Her network in Stavanger is already quite large and it is influenced by the stage of life she is in now. She mentioned that children and all kinds of activities with them have been giving her opportunities to meet many people. However, she thinks that true friends are still in Japan and Holland. Masami claims:

I am definitely not integrated here yet. And I do not think I will ever be. Language is one reason but we came here because of my husband’s work and his contract is for a limited time. That is why we have chosen international schools for our kids, not Norwegian ones. We just take our stay here temporarily. And if you think about your life somewhere in this way, you can never be fully integrated, I guess.

Masami and her husband are talking also about an option to stay in Norway as they agreed on nice environment for their children and that is just what Stavanger offers. Another highly positive fact about life in Stavanger is: “There is possible to find a balance between family and work. Time with the family is really important for me and you can get enough of it here while doing a career at the same time.” In this case she was talking more about an experience of her husband and friends as she is currently searching for a part-time job in some English speaking company. They are considering also other destinations but they cannot find one which both of them want to go to. The most important criteria for Masami now are children friendly society and city.

I asked Masami about her home and she came with the statement:

You know, I am not at home in Stavanger but I wish for my family to feel like they are at home here. In fact, I do not have home now. I still have strong feelings about Spain as that was the only location I really chose and have many friends in Holland but no. I am homeless. I probably need some Norwegian friends to start feeling like I belong here.

Masami has decided that she will go to her country of origin with her family every single year. She says: “I think I owe it to my parents. Unfortunately, it is too far to go there more often but once a year is ok. That is my task. My parents miss their grandchildren a lot.”

## 5.5 Case study 5 (Lithuania)

Name: Viktor

Country of origin: Lithuania

Came to Stavanger: 2, 5 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): yes

Education: tertiary

Occupation: student and private sector (part-time)

Lithuania is a country in Northern Europe. It is one of three Baltic states, the largest one. Lithuanian culture is based on indigenous heritage, namely Christian traditions (strongly influenced by relationship with Poland in past), Lithuanian specific language, and some cultural aspects from Nordic countries. One can notice strong cultural ties with Latvia as well as attributes of Germanic, Nordic and Slavic cultures. Transformation of Lithuania from a former Soviet Union country to an independent Baltic state meant a big shift in development of Latvian culture, too.

Viktor moved to Stavanger because he wanted to follow his love that moved there a couple of years before him. Although he saw his future well at the beginning he is currently experiencing hard times of searching for a full-time job. He says:

I am not really the happiest person in the world now. I have lots of stress and I am really worried about future. I have a small child and feel big responsibility. I cannot get a job which would comfortably cover our family expenses. I am glad that my wife works but she has a limited contract and it will expire soon.

He likes Stavanger, however he cannot deal with an attitude of Norwegians yet, he confesses. From his point of view, Norwegians are cold. He goes further:

Norwegians are nice but I feel distance. I am working on Norwegian language and trying to use it in everyday communication but it does not help as much as I expected. Sometimes I feel almost upset when I speak Norwegian and they switch into English after a couple of sentences.

He knows that his Norwegian is not so good yet but that is why he tries to use it often, although sometimes without a presumed response. Other languages Viktor can speak are Lithuanian, English and German.

His new friends are only other immigrants as he feels they have more in common. However, 'real friends' he has not met in Stavanger yet. He has them all over the world as all closest people from his country moved somewhere. Thus, he is thankful for modern age technologies. He uses Skype every day to stay in touch with them as well as with his family. He says that especially his parents are not very happy about his decision to migrate and this feeling is even stronger after his child was born. He explains:

I know it is hard for them and I feel sorry also but this is my life. They saw my future close to them but I am trying to do my best to be in contact as much as possible and share all important events of our family life. It is not so far to fly to Lithuania so when we can we go down there.

He says that sometimes he does not tell his parents about all problems he has to face to as he does not want them to be worried if they cannot help. He also claims that his current stress is partly due to culture he grew up in. It is common for men to be the one who earns money. Viktor says: "I and my wife are for gender equality and so on but, you know, it is somewhere in my head that I should be the one who contributes more. And it is so expensive here."

His culture is similar in some ways, different in others. He experienced some cultural shocks when he came to Stavanger like, for instance, drinking culture, kids sleeping in a pram, no variety in food products which are available, different health care system and some habits. He understands that some rules are meant in order to protect, for example, farmers and own agriculture but he points out that sometimes he feels like in the period of communism in his country.

He misses culture of his country a lot but he is not thinking about return within next few years. Partly because of the fact that it would not be very easy for his wife to find a job in Lithuania<sup>92</sup>, secondly also because that he likes the international society which is in Stavanger. He explains:

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<sup>92</sup> His wife is Danish and does not speak Lithuanian.

I would like my children to grow up in such a multicultural society which is more open minded. In my country there are still some tendencies related to communist period and it is really retrograde. I would like to offer them various approaches and that I can do here.

Although he would like to live in Stavanger now, he does not admit return when he gets retired. He adds: “It would be nice to go back one day but will see what future brings. Right now I think we can do better here if we both have jobs.”

Does it mean for Viktor to go back home? Not really...His description of home is related to people he loves but he points out that there is also something extra, one has to feel in order to be like at home. At the moment, he does not feel like being at home in Stavanger yet (and does not think he will ever do), on the other side he does not feel like at home in his hometown either as he does not consider himself as a part of society there. He speculates:

Many people can probably think that migrating somewhere opens the spaces for having more homes. In fact, I lost the previous one and did not get the new one yet. I feel like I do not belong anywhere. It is slightly better after we got a child; I feel less like a stranger in Stavanger but still...

From his point of view, he is not integrated yet and one of the reasons is lack of Norwegian friends and having a secure job. There are also cultural differences on a personal level like different style of housing, different approach to kids but he believes he can be a ‘real part of Norwegian society’ one day.

## **5.6 Case study 6 (Malaysia)**

Name: Li Leen

Country of origin: Malaysia

Came to Stavanger: nearly 2 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): yes

Education: upper secondary education

Occupation: parental leave

Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy in Asia. This country is multi-ethnic and multicultural. There are still descendants of indigenous tribes, Malay who moved from mainland in Asia centuries ago, Chinese and Indians. The cultural influences of all groups became significant especially after trade within those countries begun. Immigration affected forming of culture as well and one can see there also attributes of Persian, British and Arabic. People living in Malaysia now days have their unique and distinctive cultural identities which are usually a result of blending all mentioned cultures.

Li Leen likes living in Stavanger. She wants to bring up her children there, she considers Stavanger as a family friendly place, and thus she can imagine her life for a long time there. Before she moved to Norway she did not have any experience with migration although her previous job in Malaysia required lot of short-term travelling. She got know many countries but when she came to Norway she was shocked by high prices. She says: “Everything is so expensive here, it is crazy. And it is limiting. You usually do not have a possibility to go for a cheap option because there is no such.” That was one of surprises when she arrived to Norway, another one was more practical – unisex toilets. Attitude of people here was a disappointment for Li Leen. She explains: “Norwegians I met here so far are a bit reserved. It is hard to talk to them; they seem to be not interested. That is why I usually meet other immigrants here.” She mentioned her experience from a baby-swimming class:

There were only Norwegians and me. I tried hard to establish some new contacts but I did not get any kind of positive response. I have never been invited for play dates with our kids and so on although they arranged them often. Maybe the language was limiting and they did not like speaking English. I do not know.

With regard to people from her country of origin, she does not intend to search for them but she is aware of a Facebook group of Malays in Stavanger. She adds: “I would be nice to meet someone from Malaysia coincidentally though.” She thinks she is a bit unsocial because of parental leave as well as because she is a foreigner and not so confident yet. This is related to a common attitude in her country of origin. “In Malaysia it really matters which passport you have. It is almost like a hierarchy there. I am glad that no one here actually cares which nationality you are. Moreover, Stavanger is really multicultural city so English is enough for everyday communication so far.” Currently, she is working on her Norwegian. Other languages she can speak are Chinese and



English. The fact that one can find here people from all over the world has also other advantages. There are many stores selling products from different countries. Li Leen explains: I think it is great that there is an Asian store in town. I do shopping there often. Cuisine is a big part of my culture and I am happy I can make ‘my’ food and keep traditions I like.” Thus, food is quite easy to replace for her as well as related habits but there are other attributes she misses. Real friends and family are the most important. Her parents miss her a lot, too, although they are happy she lives in a generous and safe country. She keeps on going:

I am the oldest child of my parents and my son is their first and only grandchild. We talk everyday on Skype, we even set the exact time when we call because of the time shift. I am trying to be in touch as much as possible. My parents basically see our life and their grandchild online. But it is not the same like being close, of course.

When Li Leen and her husband started to talk seriously about moving out from Malaysia, she started to prepare herself emotionally and mentally for migration:

We wanted to move to Scandinavia, my husband comes from there and the living standard and way of life in Nordic countries was attractive for us. Basically, we were waiting a good opportunity to occur. It came after almost 6 years and it finally came and it was from Stavanger. We packed, sold a car and went. It was right on time because I was pregnant and we wanted to be settled.

When she left Malaysia she knew it was for good (in a way of living somewhere) that she will return only for holidays and so on. This feeling has not changed although she can imagine her life in Sweden where her husband is from. She believes that also for her son it could be nice in future – for example for studies. She highlights: “Sweden and Norway are very similar but Sweden is cheaper. That is quite a big lure.”

Although she is happy in Stavanger she does not feel like being at home there yet. However, she does not feel like at home in Malaysia either. She says:

My feelings of being at home are closely associated with loved ones. Home is for me where my heart is. Right now two most important people of my life are my husband and son and they are in Stavanger with me. But there is still something, I cannot describe what makes a barrier and I do not feel like at home here.

In fact, she does not feel like a ‘part of society’ yet either. She considers having a job, paying taxes, knowledge of Norwegian and having Norwegian friends as turning points

which make a person integrated. In future, she would like to apply for Norwegian citizenship as she sees her stay in Nordic countries as definite.

## **5.7 Case study 7 (New Zealand)**

Name: Caroline

Country of origin: New Zealand

Came to Stavanger: nearly 6 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): no

Education: tertiary

Occupation: public sector

New Zealand is an island country in the south-western Pacific Ocean. Its culture is based on British traditions mingled with Maori and Polynesian habits. One can also notice signs of rural and colonial values there. Culture of New Zealand is cosmopolitan and there is reflected natural environment, changing demographics, and influence of its well-educated Western society. Globalization and immigration from East Asia, South Asia and Pacific Island strongly modified today's form of New Zealand culture.

Caroline is an 'experienced immigrant'. She has moved to the UK and stayed for a couple of years while she was studying and then working. Then she was travelling to finally move to Stavanger. She is very happy here: "I have a job I love, found good friends, have a nice relationship. I feel as safe as anywhere ever before. Stavanger is small but beautiful." Her job plays an important role in her life. It helped her to establish new network. Caroline calls her work 'without border experience', in other words her colleagues are from all over the world and she enjoys this international environment. Through work she found many new friends but she points out it is influenced by a specific focus as well. "I am an artist and it is, let us say, uncommon profession. It gathers people with same interests so you find friends easily." However, she is very satisfied with her employment, she points out: "It is international but there is

a hierarchy. On top there are people from Scandinavia, then Europeans, and then the rest...It is unfair and some comments of my Norwegian workmates make me upset.”

Caroline started to learn Norwegian within first 6 months of her stay here. After one year, she started to feel comfortable in this new language. She appreciates, she had good teachers. However, she is struggling local dialect. From her point of view, dialects in general are used to make life more difficult for foreigners, she jokes. Caroline mentions: “Right after finishing first few courses I felt like I am learning something no one actually speaks. Stavanger dialect is so different than what we had in our books.” She can speak also English and German. When she got confidence in Norwegian she suddenly started to understand context of certain behaviour like, for example, she thought that some Norwegians were often rude before she got the knowledge of ‘no please culture’. It opened new dimensions for her.

Biggest difference she experienced in Stavanger was driving on the other side. As I mentioned above, she used to live in the UK, but there are same rules like in New Zealand. Another thing was the approach of locals. She keeps on going:

People in New Zealand are much more interested in foreigners. It is maybe because there are not so many as New Zealand is far from everything but here people do not care. On top of it, Norwegians are not so helpful. They are fine if you know them well but others usually do only what they have to. It was a problem at the beginning of my stay here when I was searching for important information and advice.

In general, her feelings about life in Stavanger are highly positive but she misses fresh, nice and cheap food, brunches, shops open late in the evening and nice coffee in cafes. From her point of view, there is only one place in Stavanger which offers good coffee. Unlike most of the interviewees, Caroline is fine with the weather in Stavanger. She points out:

I have actually never experienced living anywhere else than cost. Unpredictable weather is something I can handle. What is nice about Stavanger, it is warm and dry in houses in winter. In New Zealand it is common to have around 17 degrees Celsius inside.

Caroline likes travelling; it is a big joy of her life. She says she is very adaptable and flexible. Right now she feels comfortable in Stavanger but it is mainly thanks to her job. If she loses her job one day, she would not have a problem to go somewhere else,

although she would probably consider staying in Stavanger as well, she speculates. She adds:

I am not a person who is attached to the city. For me it is the country which matters. I do not know where my home is now. On one hand, New Zealand is home, although I do not think it is possible for me to move back. I felt a strong barrier because of a long distance from other countries. My hometown is literally a completely new city<sup>93</sup> so it would not be like a return. On the other hand, Stavanger is currently home as well but I have a strong need to travel regularly. Maybe I have more than one home.

Her relationship with her parents, especially with her mother, has been affected by migration:

My parents always knew it was going to happen one day. They were actually happy at the beginning but my mum had always an idea that I was going to return and raise kids in New Zealand. But I have decided to not to come back to New Zealand and not to have children either. It was a big disappointment for her, I know it.

Caroline explained further that after her mother resigned on having her back in New Zealand with own family, she expected at least her living in Australia, which is the closest place. Caroline thinks that her life so far from New Zealand was to a certain point a matter of inconvenience and in fact, there is no difference if you live in Australia or Europe: "Once you do not live in New Zealand, everything is far anyway and you always have to fly." Her relationship with parents has been developing but already now she noticed a progress. She can see that her mother and father are happy; she has a nice life and work she likes.

## **5.8 Case study 8 (Nicaragua)**

Name: Alejandro

Country of origin: Nicaragua

Came to Stavanger: 1, 5 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): no

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<sup>93</sup> It has been completely rebuilt after earthquake in February 2011.

Education: tertiary

Occupation: unemployed

Nicaragua is the largest country of Central America. Nicaraguan culture is very similar to other Spanish-speaking American country with a strong emphasis on religious traditions and music with intense rhythm. One can find there also attributes of British and Spanish cultures which were transmitted as a consequence of colonization. At the same time, there are noticeable also impacts of several indigenous groups. Recently, there have been noticeable immigration waves which enrich Nicaraguan culture with new aspects.

Alejandro came to Norway to visit his girlfriend originally. His plan to stay for 2 months has changed when he decided to get married and move to Stavanger. He is not very happy right now. He misses his family, friends, nice weather, culture, food and music. He does not have so many new friends here yet but those he has are mostly immigrants as well. He says:

It is difficult with Norwegians. They are reserved. Even if I meet someone interesting in town or at the party, they never want to stay in touch afterwards. It is very different in my country. I feel a bit lonely sometimes. I am glad that Skype and all kinds of applications for chats exist. It really 'saved' my life last year.

He mentioned last year because he was waiting for one year for work permission. This process was really long and stressful for him. He says: "It was hard not to have anything to do for whole year. I cannot wait to start working again but now it is not easy to find a job." He did not expect to have such big competition at labour market but he understands that he is limited because of his poor knowledge of Norwegian. He admits: "I have started to go to Norwegian course as soon as I could, when I got all my necessary documents fixed. I can see progress but it takes time. I need some job now as well." Other languages which he can speak are Spanish, English and Miskito.

The frustrating situation about having difficulties to find a regular kind of job is even intensified by the feeling of responsibility for his family in Nicaragua. Alejandro explains:

I am the oldest man in my family. It is my responsibility to support my mum and sister home. It is like common in my culture. Right now I am not able to

do it and it is depressing. I hope I will get something soon. I am sure better Norwegian will help a lot.

When Alejandro talks about home, he means Nicaragua. He is in Stavanger only because of his wife. He also believes that bringing her sister to Norway would help him to feel better. Firstly he would have a member of own family here, secondly he sees his future in Stavanger positively and is sure that she would do well also one day:

I am trying hard to get her to Norway but it is a question of having a secure job again. I believe I can have a really nice life here when I get a job; the living standard is much higher here than in Nicaragua. I would like to offer her the same.

The feeling of being at home might change in his case if he gets children or if his sister comes. Family relations are the most important for him. His family is sad he left but they are happy for him to get an opportunity for better life in Norway. Although Alejandro sees his future in Stavanger, he does not exclude an option of his return to Nicaragua when he gets retired.

As he misses his culture he actively searches for something related. He found out that there are some evenings when Latino people gather. It is about salsa and music but Alejandro says:

I was a bit disappointed. I went there to listen to nice music I like and of course, also to meet new people who I expected to have something more in common. The true is that those people after living some time here have changed a lot. I miss the attitude I was looking for and cannot find here.

Alejandro pointed out that he would be very happy to meet some people from Nicaragua but he thinks there are any. He was really surprised when I told him I found in official statistics that he is not the only one from Nicaragua here (numbers mentioned at the beginning of this chapter).

## **5.9 Case study 9 (Portugal)**

Name: Rafaela

Country of origin: Portugal

Came to Stavanger: 4 years ago

Marital status: single

Kid(s): no

Education: tertiary

Occupation: student and public sector (part-time)

Portugal is a unitary semi presidential republic located in South-Western Europe. One can describe Portuguese culture as a mixture of different civilizations as the history is reflected in that. In the fifteenth and sixteenth century Portugal was main political, cultural as well as economic power. The overseas discoveries affected the culture significantly as they brought new aspects from different cultures. Now days, Portuguese culture is still highly affected by a traditions coming from a long history and family values.

Rafaela is a very active young person; she studies and has 2 different part time jobs. Her original plan was to go to Oslo to study and work and to live with her friend. She quit her job in Portugal, took her savings and went to Norway. It was not as easy as she thought because she could not find a job after her first contract expired. She mentions: “I went to NAV<sup>94</sup> to explain my situation and ask for advice. The only answer I got was that I should go back to my country.” That time it was not easy but she managed to find a suitable job opportunity right in Stavanger so she moved. Her employer paid for the first Norwegian as well but she was studying the language on her own at the same time. She explains: “The course was not good at all. The teacher was coming late to classes and leaving earlier, never wanted to explain anything extra. It was more useful for me to study on my own. Fortunately, Norwegian is quite easy and I am a fast learner.” Her jobs today are held in Norwegian and she is fluent. She can speak also English and Portuguese. Speaking Portuguese is important for her as well that is why she tends to meet some Portuguese friends from time to time. Rafaela is a person who prefers small number of friends who are really close. Currently, she has approximately 15 and they are from all over the world. She highlight that networks are necessary especially for meeting right people at the right time, which brings many opportunities in working as well as social life.

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<sup>94</sup> NAV is an abbreviation of Nye arbeids- og velferdsetaten (“Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration”)

When she came to Norway she had in her head an idea of immigrant friendly society, helpful people, well working welfare system, sense for solidarity, high living standard for everyone. That is the way of presenting Norway all over the world. The perfect, rich and friendly country... The reality differs a lot, from her point of view:

I am not happy here. My life is ok now, but it is like a transition time for me. Stavanger is nice and small so I always meet someone I know if I go out. I also like it is very international here, nature is beautiful and I am glad I can study and work here at the same time. But I am far from home and I do not like attitude of Norwegians, health care and social system here at all.

Another unexpected issue was for Rafaela selling expired products and food in stores with a discount. She thinks: "In a modern society one should be focused on high quality. She perceives this Norwegian approach as reactionary. On the other hand, she perceives highly positively the trust which is common in Norwegian society and as an example she mentions cabins in mountains which everyone can visit and sleep in and it is expected to leave them as you found them.

There are also other things which differ a lot from her culture. Some of them are negative. Rafaela named the fact that Norwegians do not listen, that there is a corruption which is only in fact called networking, naivety of locals, that Norwegians are not really used discussing problem as they prefer not to see them at all. The most significant differences are related to children and family life. She tells in details:

It was a shock for me to find out that kids eat bread all the time in kindergarten. They start kindergarten when they are very small and I do not think it is good for their development, they should have warm food regularly. Another surprise was sleeping outside in a pram. I do not quite understand it either. Much more comfortable and resting is definitely sleeping in a crib where they can move how they need.

Rafaela also mentioned that she thinks that Norwegian parents are focused too much on special activities for their children what actually leads to not having a time to be at home together as a family. Thus, it is one of the reasons for bad relations between kids and parents, she is convinced. She sees a big contrast in her culture where family plays a major role and time spent together is highly valued.

According to Rafaela family and home are closely interwoven:

For me, home is a place you come and you feel like you never left. It is definitely in Portugal and where my parents are. I have very close



relationship with them, we share everything, talk about our worries and joys. I miss them a lot now. Home is also a place where you have people who love you just like you are.

Her perception of home implies the question about the feelings of her relatives when she decided to move. At the time when Rafaela did not have a job, parents were nervous but they also believed in the 'great image of Norway' thus they did not worry so much. Moreover, they knew Rafaela is responsible as well as it is not so easy to find interesting job opportunities in Norway. Now, when she works, they are happy for her.

As I wrote above, Rafaela takes her stay in Stavanger as a temporary solution. Before she moved to Norway she did not have any experience with migration, it has always been only a short-term mobility for a couple of days for conferences etc. She claims: "I would like to return to Portugal one day." However she feels now, she would like to contribute to Norwegian society and share her migration experience. Her aim is to develop some guidelines for Norwegian companies how to handle foreign employees with regard to multiculturalism, and thus to help them create a pleasant work environment for everyone.

## **5.10 Case study 10 (Vietnam)**

Name: An Dung

Country of origin: Vietnam

Came to Stavanger: 7 years ago

Marital status: in relationship (partner in Stavanger)

Kid(s): yes

Education: tertiary

Occupation: private sector

Vietnam is the country in Southeast Asia in the most eastern part of Indochina Peninsula. Its culture is one of the oldest in Southeast Asia in general. Vietnam was ruled by China for many centuries that is why Vietnamese and Chinese cultures are interwoven. During colonial period (in case of Vietnam one talks about French

colonialists), the culture of Vietnam was modified by Europeans (for instance, the adoption of Latin alphabet, the spread of Catholicism). Vietnamese culture was influenced by, let us say, universal communist culture because of regime. Since the 1990s, one can notice attributes of mingling with other Asian, European and American cultures. The factors which are generally considered as typical for Vietnamese culture are respect for community and family values, manual labour, bamboo, lotuses, devotion to study and ancestor veneration.

An Dung comes from a big city in Vietnam. He perceives his culture and Norwegian culture as the opposite and thinks that is the reason why he has not started to feel integrated yet. He is aware of it and tries hard to be a part of society. So far, he thinks that Stavanger is a good place for family (Norway in general) which can offer a peaceful life. Comparing to his city, Stavanger is much smaller and it comes along with less opportunities for a social life. He says: "Big cities are exciting, sometimes I feel like here are no people." Rain, wind and snow are things he had to get used to and still considers them as unpleasant. What he does not like the most are local prices.

He pointed out that a big shift in his perception of Stavanger elicited the decision of him and his wife to stay here and to bring up their kids. Originally, he came only for a limited time to study in Stavanger. After finishing his studies he started to search for a job. He explains:

We wanted to stay here because the situation is much better here than generally in Vietnam. It is not good for kids there either and we planning to have a family. However, I am still sad and have a feeling that I do not show enough respect towards my parents. It is because I am the oldest son and my responsibility is to be around when they need me. It is a cultural thing.

He is sure that he would like his child to grow up here but he is not sure if he can stay for good. Needs of his parents are determining. This fact is also limiting for his feeling of belonging. Partly he feels like he is at home in Stavanger already; partly it is still in Vietnam. He has a previous experience with migration when he used to live in Thailand for one year but he knew it was a temporary stay there and he did not really have any feelings of belonging there.

In Stavanger, he has a couple of good friends although he is an introvert and it is not so easy to set up new relationships for him. Moreover, it is hard to find topics which are in common. An Dung explains:

In Vietnam we do not talk about social thing at the party. We have completely different food habit, we always have long dinners, and a role of women in Vietnamese society is never the leading one and our music no one here knows. I have problems to start conversation. I think it is easier for Europeans as their cultures are more similar.

His friends are mostly immigrants although he wishes to have more Norwegian friends. From his point of view it is a next step to a successful integration which he would like to reach one day. He also thinks that having Norwegian friends is a way how to get a better job: “Good networks are the key. And also language...” His surmise has been proven while he applied for a job, went for an interview and was asked if he has many Norwegian friends and if he reads Norwegian newspaper. He is sure that the reason was that Norwegians are conservative and prefer Norwegians to foreigners. If immigrants have a good network among Norwegians it is like a guarantee that they will integrate successfully into work environment as well.

An Dung can speak Vietnamese, English and Norwegian although he highlights that is still working on the language. It is not easy for him as he does not need Norwegian at his work because the company uses English.

To sum up his point of view about cultural differences he mentions:

Vietnamese culture is, let us say, too polite and shy. On the other hand, the Norwegian one is too open. It is normal to ask straight questions and I often feel like it is inappropriate. In my opinion, the perfect culture would be something in between. Maybe I can develop my own one.

## 6 Comparative Analysis

In order to answer my research questions which are: ‘What are the reasons for migration to Stavanger? What does it mean to be ‘home’ for immigrants? What is this feeling of belonging influenced by? What are the key factors for decision to stay in a new destination? What makes immigrants to move back to their country of origin?’ I am presenting a comparative analysis in following lines. I am using various comparisons, namely theories and concepts versus results of my own research, different answers versus each other as well as opposing points of view.

In the theoretical part I have presented a couple of possible explanations why people migrate. I have highlighted financial and family motives, inequality in levels of incomes, employment and social well-being between country of origin and destination country. I have also been focused on extended motives of highly skilled migrants which I summed up as improvement in work and research conditions, better educational sources for children, desire for better living conditions, better political situation and better job opportunities for highly trained. On top of that, I have pointed out an idea that migration can be a result of decision of more people (usually family members) rather than of an individual. Migration of whole families is not rare.

Based on the experience of immigrants in Stavanger I have conducted my interviews with, the reasons are of 4 main kinds: studies, job opportunity, love and random choice of destination. To be more specific, first category – studies (tertiary education in case study 10) – can be linked to motives of highly skilled migrants and can be seen as improvement in work or research conditions. Second category - job opportunity – is a financial motive (in case study 7 supported also by being a unique chance of getting such work on everyday-base). Third category – love – varies. It is either to follow a partner who got an interesting job offer in Stavanger (case studies 3, 4, 6) or migration to the place where the partner is from (case studies 5, 8) or a combination of both (case study 1). This motive can be explained as a family one. Last category which appeared in my interviews I am calling a random choice of a destination. In case studies 2 and 9 immigrants chose Norway to go to but not a concrete place. Stavanger became their destination place, let us say coincidently. In one case (case study 2) there was a good offer on accommodation with nationals of the migrant, in case study 9 that was an advertisement in the newspaper when the migrant was already in Norway and

desperately searching for a new job. Connecting this option with theoretical concepts suggested above, the motive can be described as an inequality in levels of income in a host country and the country of origin because that was the original push factor why my interviewees migrated (to try if they can do better somewhere else).

Decision to stay in Stavanger (either temporarily or for good) is extended according to my research by family motives such as good educational sources for kids, better political situation or better living conditions for offspring as well as desire for better living condition. However, these reasons do not essentially have to be the original motive for migration.

Regarding my theoretical chapter, various aspects of life such as partnership, family relations, networks, work opportunities, current or previous migration experience can be used for the definition of home. It can also be based on values and beliefs of individuals and their feelings of belonging. For someone mother tongue can be 'portable home' which one takes with wherever he/she moves. There also exist a possibility that thank to migration experience one feels that he/she does not have home anymore or on the other hand has multiple homes. When one is searching for new home perception of culture and own identity play an important role.

My interviewees explained where they feel like at home and pointed out attributes which are significant for this perception. There are opinions that they feel like at home already in Stavanger (case study 1, 3 and 6). Another mentioned option is a multiple home (case study 7). Then there is also an answer that one feels like a homeless person (case study 4 and 5). Interviewees from case study 8 and 9 presented that they still feel like at home in their countries of origin. In case studies 2 and 10 the interesting phenomenon has occurred. There is a possibility that one actually 'assembles home'. It is partly feeling like being at home in the country of origin and partly in a new destination. It is not fully in any of those countries, thus not considered multiple homes.

The factors which influence the feeling of being at home are according to my interviewees: people they love around, shared culture, satisfying work or 'unexplainable' feeling of belonging somewhere or not. It differs for each person which attribute they perceive as the leading one. Family and relations influence are often crucial in establishing new home and therefore construction of one's identity.

I have noticed that the further away the country of origin is from the destination, the less likely people feel like at home in a destination country. The exceptions are former colonies as there might be a strong influence of the colonists. From my point of view, this phenomenon is based on dis/similarity of cultures in contact. This works in my small study, with my selected group of immigrants in Stavanger, however I do not tend to generalize or simplify this result.

The decision to stay or to return to the country of origin is often linked to the feeling like at home or as the case may be to the feeling of belonging. The New Economics of Migration understands return as the natural outcome of a successful experience abroad. Family or household is crucial, financial perspective relevant.

Here I have to point out, that some of my interviewees are in the 'mixed' relationship where the partner comes from a different country of origin than he/she. This implies a question where to return in fact?

Regarding to results of my interviews<sup>95</sup>, immigrants either would like to stay in Stavanger (case study 2, 3, 5, 6, 8), want to move back to the country of origin (case study 9), see the future in a 'brand new' destination (case study 1 and 4) or they do not plan anything particular and are flexible if some new opportunity appears (case study 7). In one case (case study 10), the interviewee is pushed by a cultural tradition to move back although he would prefer to stay in Stavanger.

Just like in case of return migration, in all my research questions family ties play a crucial role for most of my interviewees. The decision about migration usually takes account of the best possibility for the family as a whole, rather than the interest of an individual.

In general, after conducting my interviews I can present that culture influences how migrants see their migration experience as it is something what provides the original worldview. Based on the concept from the beginning, culture is a pattern or foundation on which people act. It is a social construct which is essentially open and constantly developing. It is formed by shared values, beliefs, traditions, knowledge and concepts

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<sup>95</sup> There I would like to point out that in all answers I noticed a certain level of probability rather than definite opinion.

which, to a certain point, govern how people feel. Therefore, culture and identity are two phenomena which go hand in hand also in cases of my interviewees.

## **6.1 Discussion**

At the end of my paper I would like to present a couple of concluding remarks which I have been thinking about while writing about my topic. Firstly, from my research one can see that there is a recurrent phenomenon with regard to establishing a new network within a host society. My interviewees present that they tend to meet (or have new friends among) other immigrants rather than Norwegians. Here is one possible explanation why there can be a gap in communication of immigrants and people from host society. Let us imagine a following situation...You start working somewhere and you meet your new colleague for the first time. One of first questions is usually (with regard to my own experience) ‘Where are you from?’, then the answer follows and then the other side asks either the same (in case of two migrants), or does not (in case of a migrant-local conversation). The feeling of mutual interest and subsequently sharing experience can be a key in order to start communication and allow the space for getting know each other. Then the situation can lead into a developing of relationship. In case of immigrants the positions of both people are more equal but in case of meeting an immigrants and a local there is an imbalance. This is only my suggestion which describes, let us say, the very first step but from my point of view it can help to explain this issue. In other words, the communication among immigrants and Norwegian has to overcome a challenge which sometimes can occur. I do not intend to say that all immigrants are necessarily interested in each other, I do not present that locals are never interested in foreigners either but it is a suggestion what can happen and what people might feel. One can admit that this draft is very limited and simplified and of course, this is not the only topic people talk about but I would like to point out the fact that already before you get to know someone better you can say you have something in common, you share some experience and it can a facilitation.

Secondly, in order to succeed in a host society, immigrants have to overcome many challenges. One of them can be called problem with non-transferable degrees (meaning having a degree which is not recognized by destination country). However, that is not the only issue related to gained education. Often migrants cannot actually use their

knowledge as the new language plays a key role. Most companies in a host society obviously use as a working language Norwegian (in case of my study), thus although some immigrants have tertiary education and are considered highly skilled workers, they cannot get a job within their field unless they speak the language of a host society. Thus, in many cases highly educated people have to work for much lower salary for some time until they reach a certain level of Norwegian which is required. Then they can start using their degree and gain the advantage of their previous studies also in order to be better paid.

It worth mentioning that development of modern technologies, fast and relatively cheap travelling by planes, easy access to information change the perception of migration experience a lot. Especially Skype which provides free video phone calls can contribute to the feeling of sharing. Some of my interviewees said they actually see their relatives more often than when they used to live close to each other. The experience of seeing each other are obviously different as people, for instance, cannot touch each other but they can express their emotions, share joys and worries or can even be a part of especial events online. From my point of view, these communication tools contribute to the development of transnationalism as it is easier to keep networks at more places. It might be also the reason why the concept of transnationalism, which I briefly introduced at the beginning, is relatively new. It is a big difference from migration in the past when people used to send letters, could not read newspaper from their countries online, had to plan their travelling a long time in advance etc.

With regard to immigration to Stavanger in particular, the low unemployment rate can be misleading. It might imply that the chance of getting a job is high, therefore motivate and attract migrants to move. However, it does not necessarily have to be so easy to succeed in the local labour market. For instance, for immigrants who recently moved to Stavanger, do not speak the language yet it can be very difficult. Of course, there are many English speaking companies, the city is multicultural but the unemployment rate number does not show how many people are applying for jobs from abroad. In other words, people in Stavanger do not compete only with each other but often with people from whole world. In my opinion this phenomenon is so significant in Stavanger because there is again the widely-spread image of rich Norway in general and on top of that the city which is the oil capital. It is attractive but for those who move and then start



searching for a job, it can bring disappointment and can be a big challenge which they might not realize before they decided to go to Stavanger.

Another interesting topic I have been thinking about is a bit more psychological and might be my next research focus in the future. It is a well-known fact that migration might influence relationships among people. One of my interviewees complained that he lost his friends in a country of origin as they were not able to surmount the gap which was based on suddenly completely different impulses running their lives. It probably happens often and I personally have to avow it as well. On the other side, migrants can get new friends in a new destination. But what about partnerships? Do people feel closer to each other if they move to a country which is new for both of them? Do they rely on each other more? What are the positive and negative sides of sharing such an experience? There are many more related questions which can be asked and I am presenting here only a few examples which might be taken as a hint for someone to do some detailed research on this topic.

To conclude my study I would like to explain the title of my Thesis which is 'Migration for wealth?' In this sentence I meant to express the most suggesting itself reason and statement which many people agree on when that comes to a discussion about the topic why people migrate to Norway. The question mark should imply my assumption which I had from the very beginning of my work on Thesis that the motives of migrants can be more miscellaneous and specific. Therefore, with regard to my field work I would say yes, on one hand the title is fitting, a favourable economic situation in Stavanger and job opportunities play an important role and attract many immigrants although not necessarily directly. Most of my interviewees migrated in order to follow their love. Therefore, another suitable title of my Thesis (based on results of my research) could be more a bit more romantic. 'Migration for love' would fit as well.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 .....Interview Guide

### Appendix 1 - Interview Guide

Time for one interview – expectation – 45-60 minutes

All interviewees – the age group 25-35, different countries of origin

All interviewees will have a brief information about my research and interests as following:

*In my Thesis I would like to put a special emphasis on immigrants in Stavanger and their perception of the migration experience. I am focused on labour market as well because I assume that at least some of the respondents, I am planning to conduct the interviews with, came to Stavanger right because of lucrative job opportunities or are/are planning to be active in the Stavanger labour market.*

*The main reason why I have chosen this topic is that I also moved to Stavanger and currently searching for a job. It will be interesting for me to find out more about the experience of my respondents who are more or less in the similar situation. I would like to detect if there are some common problems we have to face to, suchlike surprises or other issues which are analogous.*

Structure:

1. at the beginning of every interview – ensuring my interviewees that there are no right or wrong answers so no need to be nervous
2. explanation again what are my interests
3. making sure they understood what I sent to them in advance, what are goals for my thesis
4. explanation – they always have a right to say “I do not feel like talking about this” and also “I do not want to be a part of your research anymore”
5. making clear that there will not be any identifying information or sensitive data, it will not be possible to recognize my interviewees
6. the actual interview
7. making sure again that I can get back in case I need to add something or specify something during the process of writing
8. thanks for the time and willing to talk to me

Topics for my interviews:

**1. Profile of my interviewee: age, country of origin, occupation, family status**

**2. Length of stay here**

**3. Feelings about Stavanger and life here so far**

Are you happy here? Why/why not? What do you like about life here and what you do not?

**4. Surprises in the new destination**

Have you here some kind of cultural shock here? Are there some things/habits which are very different from what you know from your country?

**5. Language**

Which languages you can speak? Have you already started with Norwegian? How important is Norwegian language from your point of view in your current situation and for your future? Do you think you could live here comfortably without Norwegian? Do you think you could get a dream job here easier than in your home country? From your point of view, would it be possible without Norwegian?

**6. Previous experience with migration**

Have you ever lived somewhere else than in your country of origin? Why did you move?

**7. Friends here (emphasis on nationals)**

What is your definition of “a friend”? Do you have some friends here or still only people you know? Do you have Norwegian friends? Do you tend to meet foreigners? Do you meet people from your country here?

**8. Home**

What “home” means for you? Where do you feel like “I am home”?

**9. Missing factors**

Are there some factors/things which you miss here? On the other hand, are there some things which you have been missing in your home country and you have them here?

**10. Family attitude in a country of origin**

Was your family happy when you decided to move? Has the attitude of your family members changed?



### **11. Future plans/changes in preliminary plan already now**

What was your plan like when you came to Stavanger? For how long you were planning to stay here and why? Has this changed and how? Do you see your future here and which factors do this decision depend on?